NUBILIA

IN SEARCH OF A HUSBAND;

INCLUDING

SKETCHES

OF

MODERN SOCIETY

AND INTERSPERSED WITH

MORAL AND LITERARY DISQUISITIONS.

FOURTH EDITION,

CONTAINING TWO ADDITIONAL CHAPTERS.

The proper study of mankind is MAN. *Pope.*

Some *married* persons, even in their *marriage*, do better please God than some *virgins* in their state of *virginity*. *Taylor.*

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PREFACE.

THE following work has no title to the name of a novel. Its incidents are few, and its characters fewer. What, then, it may be asked, was the author's object in composing it?

The object aimed at, was to produce a volume which might contain sentiment, language, and descriptions, worthy of being read. To effect this, it was thought that they might be more popular, by being connected, in some degree, with a narrative. But the narrative, as the reader will very soon perceive, was a subordinate object. It was considered merely as a vehicle for the conveyance of opinions upon morals, society, and literature.

The disquisitions which are, occasionally, introduced, may, perhaps, render the volume unacceptable to those who are tempted to read it from the expectation

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of finding it merely a work of fiction, wrought up by the standard of a modern novel. But they will, I hope, procure readers among those, whose praise is worthy of reception.

In the language employed, it has, sometimes, been attempted to construct it with a greater latitude of rhetorical embellishment, than is usually thought consistent with English prose. The author differed from those who place all the excellence of writing in simplicity: and it is confessed, that the aim has been, in particular passages, (which need not be pointed out), to try how elevated English prose might be made, without becoming turgid. If the attempt has failed, it is hoped that the error will be detected by those who are competent to judge.

A very few parts of the following pages have appeared in print under a different form; but, they are here introduced with additions or alterations.

Some of the opinions which are expressed cannot be expected to find gene-

ral acceptance. Let them be wholly rejected, if my readers please; but let *my motives* be liberally and candidly appreciated.

The title of the book sufficiently proclaims that it has been written from the suggestion of *Cœlebs in Search of a Wife*; but, no one can pronounce it a servile imitation.

It is not to deprecate criticism that it is told, the following work was commenced on the 10th of May, 1809, and finished on the 3d of June following.

PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

IN preparing this edition of *Nubilia* for the press, I have availed myself of every suggestion (whether dictated by the spirit of liberal criticism, or whether the effusion of literary rancour) which my judgment approved of as being founded in truth.—Many things, which were noted as erro-

neous.

neous, I have forborne to alter, because I did not think them so myself. It was a matter of opinion, and I saw no reason for distrusting my own.

It has been objected by some that *Nubilia* does *not* search for a husband; but those who made this objection surely forgot the situation in which I placed myself, by giving that title to my work which I did. I wished to depict *Nubilia* as a female distinguished by delicacy of sentiment and strength of understanding; and it certainly was not consistent with the former, to make her too liberal of situations which it is scarcely thought decorous in a female to talk about. It should be remembered that *Nubilia* speaks of *herself*: and what opinion would be formed of her mind if she were found too willing to riot in descriptions, which may be *natural*, but which certainly are not fitted to enhance our estimation of her who dwells upon them? It is very just that a man should expatiate upon the charms of courtship, upon the anticipations of marriage, and upon the delights of mutual intercourse: but we very willingly absolve the female

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sex from the avowal of such sentiments. It was this consideration that fettered me. I could not make *Nubilia* seek for a husband without making her unamiable. I wish I had not adopted the title: and they will read the work with most advantage and most justice to the author's views, who read it without any recollection of its name.

It seems to have been impossible to avoid a comparison between *Cœlebs* and *Nubilia*. They are in no respect similar. They were never meant to be so. The merits of *Cœlebs* (and very eminent merits it certainly has) cannot detract, by comparison, from those of *Nubilia.*

Another objection has been made to this work. The intellectual character of *Nubilia* is unnatural. The reasonings, the notions, and the disquisitions which proceed, as from her, are, it seems, not to be found in a female of her age, even with all her facilities of superior education. This may be true; and they who know the sex best will perhaps be most convinced of its truth. But I had to choose between excellence and insipidity.

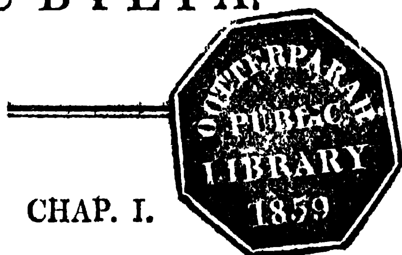
I was compelled to make her the organ of knowledge, which violated consistency of character; or to fill my pages with the prattle which may be supposed to be natural to a young girl. There are few, I believe, who will blame my choice.

I have added two chapters to this second edition (Chapters XX and XXI.) because I thought the work finished too abruptly, and that Mr. Vaughan's character had not been sufficiently developed. This will be considered as an improvement: and I hope the opinions promulgated in them upon two evils of life of no common magnitude will find some sanction among my readers. If I thought my *name* could add any weight to these opinions I would gladly communicate it; but as I do not think so, I must leave them to operate by their own intrinsic merit, and still beg leave to subscribe myself

THE AUTHOR.

London, August 15, 1809.

NUBILIA.



CHAP. I.

IF there be any, whose curiosity shall prompt them to inquire why I have written the following pages, let them read on, and their curiosity shall be answered. If there be any, whose minds have lost the relish of virtue, and to whom the dictates of wisdom are without delight, let them desist; for to them shall this work be of no profit nor amusement. If there be any, who, like myself, have deliberated upon human happiness; who have endeavoured to subdue the voice of passion, and to awaken, within them, the love of truth and the fear of

evil; who have striven to divest the actions of man of all their gaudes and trappings, to pierce their motives, to watch their results, and to note their consistency; if there be any, who have thus thought, thus endeavoured, and thus acted, to them do I address myself. Them I [illegible] upon to read with diligence the wisdom of experience, and to practise with sedulity the precepts of reason.

Smile not at this exordium, ye whose minds have never stepped beyond the beaten path of custom; ye, who have taken appetite for your guide and folly for your helpmate; ye, who have bowed at the shrine of fashion and walked hand in hand with intemperance and vice; ye, who have sworn, upon the altar of desire, to vows of holy import, and have perjured yourselves; ye, who have listened to the voice of indifference, and ye who have yielded to the dictates of authority. It is not to the corrupt, the thoughtless;

thoughtless, the gay, or the breaking heart, that I address myself. It is not to her who dances in her fetters with a look of idiot joy, or a mind of insensibility; it is not to her who wears them with patient anguish, nor to her who endures them no longer than till opportunity offers when to exchange them for the ignominious ones of vice: but to HER who is yet free, and whose judgment bids the passions be humble and the desires be dumb; who has the power to act, and a mind to regulate that power by the decrees of reason. SHE may read with advantage, for she is yet the arbiter of her own happiness, as far as human beings can be so.

"There is no condition of life which so extensively operates upon its joys and miseries, as the human institution of marriage. It is a state into which some fly from choice, and some are driven by necessity; some adopt it from example, and some from convenience; while others

embrace it without any distinct view of its nature, merely because they have been accustomed to regard it as something inevitable.

"Of a situation so universal, it might be expected that felicity would be a distinguishing character; for what all do must be done from some general and vague anticipation of happiness. Yet, I believe, the voice of discontent is more frequently heard than of pleasure; and they who can number marriage among the blessings of their existence, are to be envied for their good fortune or their apathy.

"That marriages are often contracted with an imprudent disregard of mutual circumstances; that disparity of habits, temper, and character produces wretchedness in those who are hourly compelled to endure the collision of this disparity; that men are unreasonable, and women negligent; and that more than human perfection is expected from less than

human virtue, are complaints of conjugal misery too common and too true to need illustration from my pen."

Such were the words I employed on another occasion, when contemplating a very particular cause of matrimonial infelicity; and I have used an allowable privilege, that of quoting myself: but I must now use another, the propriety of which is not so evident, that of *speaking* of myself.

The accusation of egotism is justly preferred against him who obtrudes his own concerns, his thoughts, his opinions, or himself, where there is no regular occasion for it; and, as this impertinent introduction of one's self is a symptom either of great weakness or of great vanity, and usually of both, it is never beheld by others without much contempt. But, when an individual sits down with the avowed intention of communicating his own notion of things, of detailing the events that have happened to him,

and the scenes of life in which he has been engaged, or which he has beheld, he assumes a privilege which no one has a right to deny him, if it be made subservient neither to folly nor to vice.—Indeed, in conversation, and in books, there are few things that interest us more than where men *speak of themselves*; provided always, that it be done with that attention to what is fit, to time, to place, and to circumstance, without which nothing can please.—These self-exhibitions have, then, a charm peculiar to themselves. They delight us, because, in general, they display such situations, such events, and such thoughts as we are all liable to experience. We listen, without much emotion, to the alarms of tyrants, the hypocrisy of courts, and the dangers of greatness: but our sympathy is immediately excited by the narrative of a fire, a robbery, or a murder. The perils of the former are too remote, and too little likely

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to encompass ourselves; but every man is exposed to the dangers of a conflagration, to the ferocity of the footpad, or to the midnight attack of the murderer. The poet, indeed, has observed that the "proper study of mankind is man;" but we are not formed to embrace the whole world in our minds; and happily for us that we are not: for, if we were susceptible of sympathy with all the different hopes and fears and desires that agitate the various minds of men as they are variously intent upon different objects, we should be more wretched than imagination can conceive. That tenderness which affects to encircle the whole of human kind; that sensibility which weeps alike at the reverses of a petty prince of a remote Asiatic province, and at the calamities of disease, penury, and vice, which appear before the eyes, may delude the ignorant into applause, and soothe the possessor with the belief of abounding love and kindness; but the discriminating

discriminating mind sees only a morbid delicacy of feeling, or a cold and sluggish apathy which consoles itself with the admission of principles that have no operative influence.

Our affections, good or bad, can be excited only by hope or fear; and neither hope nor fear can be raised in us by very remote causes. I cannot therefore expect that the following pages will benefit those who are, by any accident, removed from the sphere of action which they describe, and *they* will be most ready to reproach me with egotism; a charge from which (for the reasons I have assigned) others will necessarily absolve me. They, however, who cannot derive advantage, may perhaps receive amusement.

Of my ancestry I shall say little. My family, for several generations, possessed an estate in Cumberland. It descended, unimpaired, to my father, whose prudent, yet liberal, economy, added to its value;

value; so that he left it to me, who was his only child, a rich inheritance. I cannot conceive that any person will be instructed or amused by a description of the family mansion, the disposition of the grounds, the pellucid beauty of the ponds, or the direction of the gravel walks. Were they going to be sold by auction, it might be of some utility to a purchaser to have a rhetorical description of the demesnes he intended to buy. Neither shall I indulge myself (though there is a strong temptation to it) in depicting the scenery of my native place. Annual tourists have already embodied (as far as language can embody) the varied beauties of that part of England: to them who have beheld, all description must be superfluous: to them who have not, it must be inadequate.

I never knew the blessings of maternal solicitude. It was the will of Heaven that my mother should be removed from me while I was yet in a state of helpless infancy.

infancy. But the same Providence spared to me a father whose love was boundless, and whose reason swayed that love by its most unbending laws. He reared me with chastened fondness. The rebel tear of disobedience never sullied my eye; for his humanity had taught him, that it was base severity to punish our offspring for those errors that flow from our own mismanagement. He had always believed, and towards me his belief became practice, that *consistency* in education was the paramount obligation imposed upon us; and that, consistency duly persevered in, would accomplish what no corporeal punishment ever could. By this consistency he understood an uniformity in our conduct towards children, in our language, in our approbation, and in our censure. He lamented the infrequency of this eminent virtue in parents; but, at the same time, he confessed that it required such a constant self-vigilance as few were willing

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to submit to. He used to reprobate, with strong indignation; the conduct of those who sometimes visited the errors of their children with severe chastisement, and at others, supinely suffered the very same errors to be committed without any correction, or perhaps without even a slight intimation of disapproval. Such unfeeling insincerity, he used to say, resembled the conduct of those wretches who held out deceitful lights upon a rocky coast to lure some night-wildered vessel to destruction, that they might glut upon the misery they had caused.

The simple rules by which he regulated his own conduct, as far as it operated upon me, he acted upon from the first, from the very dawn of reason. He never suffered himself to be swayed from the immutable dictates of truth and right, by the persuasions of others, or by my entreaties, though he loved me with an unlimited affection. I learned early, therefore,

therefore, to know that his decisions were unalterable; I *invariably* found the same actions approved or disapproved, according to their nature; and I acquired a practical conviction of right and wrong, which was always present to me, and which secured me from those deviations into which children fall from the negligence of their parents, or those who have the guidance of them.

Such an habitual observation of simple, practical truths, produced the happiest results. My father rejoiced to behold a confirmation of the opinions he had formed; and his acquaintance congratulated him upon the docility of his daughter. Those who would gladly have obtained the same effects in their own families, knew not the method, (or knowing it, found it too irksome) by which to produce them. They sheltered their own insufficiency behind the common bulwark; in me, it was *natural disposition*. They conceived my father

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to be entitled to no more praise than the husbandman who sows his seed in fertile earth; while they considered themselves as doomed to cultivate a barren soil, that produced, with all their tilth, but a scanty harvest. It is thus that thousands shroud themselves in the sullen persuasion of their destiny; and thus they bring immortal beings into the world, launch them forth upon the trackless ocean of life, without a pilot and without a helm.

But my father thought and acted differently. He believed a parent's duty, rightly understood, to be one of the most sacred that can be undertaken. It would be superfluous to add, that he did not consider this duty as discharged, by providing food and raiment, masters at home, a boarding-school abroad, toys, books, and amusements. To him the duty appeared a perpetual watching. It had no remission but in the hours of sleep. It was to be exercised on all occasions,

occasions. It was to provide for the bodily and the spiritual health; it was to secure temporal and eternal welfare. Nothing was unimportant. Thoughts were to be instilled, actions were to be regulated, words were to be watched. Not a look, not a motion, but its motive and its tendency were to be noted. He did not consider the inheritance of sin as washed away by the baptismal rite. It demanded perpetual vigilance to check the opening shoots of vice and error; to exterminate them; to plant, in their place, a growth of surer omen, of lovelier aspect. Precept he illustrated by example, and example he enforced by precept. Yet all this was without harshness or tyranny. To me, my father's presence was never a restraint. If he chid me, it was with so much tenderness and love, that my tears flowed in bitterness to have offended so good a parent. But the censure uttered, and all was past with him. He dwelt not

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with gloomy anger upon my faults: he used no morose expressions, no austere insinuations: the frown departed from his brow, and the smile of peace and love appeared. This was the signal for me to cast my arms around his neck, and acknowledge, with a bursting heart, my error. He received my promise of future obedience with confidence, which it was my pride and joy never to betray.

Though he was left a widower at an early age, he never thought of renewing a connection which had given him much happiness. The fullness of his wishes was complete in elegant retirement, in the society of some select friends, and in the attentions he bestowed on me. I received no instruction from masters. All that was connected with books, was given to me by my father; and all that was peculiar to my sex was bestowed upon me by a domestic, (or rather an humble friend) who had endeared herself to my father by her tenderness and devotion

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to my mother during her last and tedious illness. Nor was she without those other qualities of the mind that served to corroborate the impulse of feeling.' This person taught me the *essential* requisites of a female; and my father, the necessary accomplishments of a rational being and a christian.

Within the pale of my acquisitions was *Latin.* Terrific sound to female ears, and something almost as unintelligible as the theses of Thomas Aquinas. The jealousy of man and the acquiescence of woman have, equally, concurred to proscribe the liberal cultivation of the female mind. The former, in proud superiority, have pronounced it incompatible with the discharge of duties paramount to the vain parade of intellectual pre-eminence. Opprobrious epithets have been invented to stigmatize the possessor of knowledge that towers beyond the nursery and the kitchen; contempt and ridicule have been employed to degrade

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those qualities in us, which they prize so highly in themselves. They would insinuate that nature has denied us the common privileges of her children: that she has disunited us from human kind by a disparity of mind which leaves us no hope of equality: and, in conformity with this persuasion, they forget that we have minds at all. Let me rejoice that this was not the error of my father. He believed solid, rational knowledge to be the source of all that is great, or dignified, or useful in life; that, in proportion to the light which directs us, will be the steadiness of our path; and that the duties of existence are never performed with such regularity, or with such complacency, as when we know their origin, their import, and their efficacy.

If we open the gardens of delight to the inquirer, who shall direct his vagrant steps? I was admitted into the sanctuary, and I longed to go forward. Paths of pleasure appeared on every side.

Happiness was around me, and I was eager for enjoyment. But indiscriminate fruition too often leads to folly and to pain. We need a conductor most, when most we seem able to direct ourselves. We mistake the impulses of desire for the dictates of reason. I found that conductor in my father.

He gave me knowledge with no niggard hand, but his prohibition was upon all frivolous, all dubious, all dangerous information. The pure recesses of human genius were open to my inspection; but I was early taught to blush at reading what a chaste tongue would blush to utter. My taste was formed upon correct models. Nothing can embellish the mind which corrupts the heart: nothing can delight it, which offends the judgment. These principles were rooted in me, and I was secure from contagion. I had no prurient curiosity to gloat upon the offals of human depravity: no secret pleasure in penetrating into impurity.

rity. I dared not trust in the fallacy, that what was known only to myself was without the stigma of vice: I owed to my father that native dignity of virtue which does not lean upon mankind for its support, but possesses inherent vigour; and where such virtue is, it proves a buckler of perpetual efficacy against the allurements of corruption. It was this that enabled me to close my eye upon the page where human nature was exhibited in its meanest and most degrading characters. It will be known to those who have experienced it, that this is a task of frequent recurrence; for, how few (and I write it with shame) are the authors whose works can be read through without contamination being received!

Yet, with all these restrictions, my pleasures were neither few nor trivial. There are, among my countrymen, some writers of unsullied purity: men who never lent their pens to those temporary

sallies of depravity which occasionally blemish the pages of the highest names in the records of literature. These were sources of constant delight. Language cannot adequately express the rapture with which I have perused the works of Milton, Addison, Johnson, Cowper, Collins, Thomson, Akenside, Gray, and Goldsmith. Nor have I failed to derive my full portion of instruction and pleasure from Dryden, Pope, Swift, Arbuthnot, and other authors, who, though they have contaminated their volumes with what a wise man should be ashamed of, have, notwithstanding, written enough to shew that their aberrations sprung from the wantonness, not from the deficiency, of genius.

In every thing which I read, my father was present, to resolve my doubts, to illustrate what was obscure, to lead my mind to what was excellent, and to disclose to it what was erroneous. My progress was such as satisfied him; but

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he seldom used the language of praise. He was not accustomed to render his commendation cheap by its frequency. When he *did* approve, it was warmly; but then it was certain to be in favour of something that really merited such distinction. He utterly condemned that pliancy of encomium which scatters its soothing accents alike upon the great and the mean, upon what is excellent and what is trifling. It diminishes its own value, and injures young minds by relaxing the vigour necessary to great attainments. That which can be procured with little difficulty will never be sought with much.

Music was admitted as an auxiliary. There are moments when we are unfit for strict application, when we are unfit even for rational discourse. Meditation, at such times, is apt to become frivolous; or, the mind may lie inert, productive of neither good nor bad. Against such sluggishness music furnished an antidote.

dote. It possessed, indeed, an absolute merit. Regulated by taste and judgment, it was capable of producing emotions nearly approaching to the sublimity of moral and heroic action: it was capable of softening the heart to pity, or elevating it with dignity. It can command the tears of sympathy and the smiles of delight. It can soothe the mind that is stricken with sorrow, and it can exhilarate the heart that beats with gladness. It can recal to the memory events which have passed long since, and connect itself with those moments of our life which we remember with pleasure, or wish to recollect with solemn reminiscence. A favourite tune of a departed friend or relative; an air that we first heard, perhaps, in the company of those that we love and who are absent; or one that was sung in some delightful spot, when nature's beauteous charms lent added harmony; can never be heard without exciting those affections which purify the heart. And of music, too,

too, it may be said, what can be said of few human pleasures, that while it delights it does not vitiate. We rise from the indulgence with composed thoughts, with a placid mien and with a susceptibility of benevolent and amiable affections.

But such cannot be the praises of an attainment usually united with that of music: I mean *dancing*. I will not dissemble that while yet a child, I looked with envy upon my playmates as they exhibited before me the graceful agility of their dancing masters; and as I could not comprehend why I should be excluded from an *accomplishment* so *necessary* to a *young lady*, I regarded my father's inhibition as severe. But I knew that his will was not to be changed by entreaty, and I therefore submitted, though with reluctance, to a fate that was inevitable.

It was my father's custom merely to signify his determination, when he knew that

that the principles upon which that determination rested, were above my comprehension. But in every other case, he studiously endeavoured to display to me the reasons by which he was influenced in his conduct towards me, and thus, by satisfying my mind, ensuring that undeviating observance of his wishes which flowed from my own conviction. But what he forbore to explain at the time, he did not afterwards forget. When I had arrived at that period which he thought favourable to the disclosure, he communicated to me the motives which swayed him in his interdiction of dancing: and, as far as my memory will enable me, I will repeat his own words.

"Dancing," said he, "affords, beyond any other kind of amusement, the strongest facilities, and, I may add, the strongest temptations to vice. I despise the futile declamation which would persuade us that it is an innocent relaxation

or pleasure. It never can be innocent, if it be social. Corruption is sucked in at every reeking pore of the body as it glides along. The eyes are panders to the soul, and every sense is depraved. In a ball room the common decencies of life are absolved or forgotten. Actions, from which the modest female would shrink alarmed in any other place, are here tolerated, are here necessary. The timid eye of chastity is closed, and all the meek reserve of virgin purity is lost. Intemperate wishes fill the bosom, and thoughts, far remote from virtue, take possession of the mind.

"Think not, my child, that I exaggerate the danger. Experience has taught me the existence of evils, from which I hope to shield you by counsel. The Lacedemonians guarded their children from the bestial vice of drunkenness by exposing their slaves to them in that state. Let me secure *you* from vice by admonition.

"I would

"I would exhort that parent, who thinks dancing a harmless pleasure, to divest himself, for a moment, of prejudice and the power of custom, and examine what are its concomitants. Let him note the orgies of a ball room. Let him consider what are its established rules. Let him view his daughter successively the property of every man in the room. Let him view her with arms mutually entwined, bosom to bosom, heart to heart; let him remember the facilities thus presented for personal contamination: let him not repose confidence in the virtue of his child when every external circumstance combines to undermine that virtue: the blaze of light that enchants, confounds, bewilders the senses; the exhilarating sounds of music; the dazzling novelty, perhaps, of a numerous and elegant assembly; the general joy that thrills through the frame; the heated blood that flows in burning course through the veins; the pride

pride of excellence in the display of graceful attitudes, in the rapidity of motion, in the accuracy of step; the natural vanity of emulation:—what are all these? And what is the barrier that she can oppose against them? But this is not all. With the heart and mind thus prepared, what ravages may not other passions commit? The exultation of humbling a rival mistress: the applause of contending adorers, the smooth, guileful tongue of seduction, may prevail at such a moment. Or, if virtue still make a stand, yet, how may its power be insulted or weakened, by the open attacks of the profligate; by him who seizes the opportunity of closest contact, to communicate infection which spreads with dreadful rapidity. She will not seek redress by complaint, for she fears to be thought conscious of a meaning that half alarms her; but she *is* conscious: and if she smiles her adversary hails the signal with impure, with unmanly rapture.

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"Are not these the dangers of a ball room? But thousands will call them visionary, and thousands will disbelieve them: some will acknowledge their possibility, and others will despise them: I, however, am satisfied of their existence; and, believing that, hold myself bound in duty to shield you, my child, from their influence. The physical benefits which the human frame can derive from dancing, may be obtained at less hazard. It may be invigorated by other exercises, and it may be rendered erect and firm by attention. That grace which it is in the power of a dancing master to bestow, is but vulgar mimickry of a vulgar model. True grace is the offspring of the mind."

To such counsel who could refuse compliance? My reason was satisfied, and I cheerfully declined an acquisition that was accompanied with such peril. My father, too, would often observe, that the habit of attending balls frequently led

led to improper connections, and from negligence, was commonly injurious to the health. But he acknowledged that these dangers might be partly, if not wholly, avoided by the circumspection of parents: while the others were totally beyond their controul.

Of perils that were likely to happen, he thought it a parent's duty to avoid rather than to resist. If serpents lie in a path, it is safer wisdom to turn into another, than to risk the probability of passing through them unhurt. If you give to a child the means of dangerous pleasures, trust not to the discretion of human nature. Power is a dangerous weapon in the hands even of the prudent; but when it is likely to be wielded by the passions instead of the reason, then it becomes formidable indeed.

CHAP. II.

In the autumn of 1807, my father's brother, Sir James Wilmot, paid us a visit. He brought with him his eldest daughter, Sophia, whose health had been impaired by the irregularities of a London winter, and who was now seeking its restoration in the bosom of nature. She was an interesting girl in person and in manner; and I could easily learn, from her conversation, that the dissipation of fashion was not congenial to her, though she wanted energy to resist what her heart and mind did not approve. She condemned with severity the follies she partook of; but not with that egregious self-deception that made her blind to her own participation. She lamented to me the *necessity* (as she called it) which compelled her to enter into pursuits that rarely pleased at the moment,

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and always left a painful recollection behind them. She was formed for the placid delights of retirement and literature, rather than for the turbulent amusements of the world. She considered, as a delightful respite, her present absence from London, and she could not forbear expressing her regret that the absence was but temporary. She resembled many other individuals who find themselves involved in pursuits, which they neither sufficiently approve to render them satisfactory, nor sufficiently disapprove to render them hateful. They have fallen in with them by accident rather than by design, and continue them from habit rather than from choice. There is nothing in them sufficiently criminal to alarm their conscience, nor is there enough sufficiently useful to satisfy their reason. They pass their days in alternate compliance and discontent, without resolution to retire, and without confidence in proceeding.

ceeding. Such a situation is to be pitied rather than blamed; for there is the consciousness of error, which is always painful, without the energy of amendment which subdues pain by hope. A mind thus fluctuating between contrary desires, is in a state of constant perturbation. It has not solidity sufficient for any principle to take root. There is no general system of action, but a perpetual succession of motives that do not always produce the same effects: and the conduct of such persons appears to be, and in fact is capricious and fantastical. They are creatures of the moment. They pursue no settled course, but follow the stream of life in all its windings, and commit themselves to the mercy of the winds.

Sophia, however, was not so far gone. Yet, for want of definite notions of conduct, she was considerably obnoxious to reproach for an irresolute and uncertain deportment. I had never seen her before: but

but there was such a native sweetness of manner about her, so much candour, gaiety, and feeling, that I became irresistibly attached to her. Her very errors were graceful; and the effect they had upon me, convinced me how difficult it must be to resist such fascination without those arms with which my father's wisdom had furnished me.

In moments of hilarity, she would sometimes rally me for having never been in London. She would become eloquent in the praises of that happy spot, which I have since known and examined. She would extol the magnificence of its assemblies, the enchanting variety of its amusements, the grandeur of its edifices, and the splendour of its exhibitions. She would be voluble in the praise of actors, dancers, and singers; and she would rejoice in the recollection of a crowded ball-room, whose fœtid atmosphere was loaded with disease, reeking from a thousand lungs. I have sat pa-

tiently, and heard of things which I could not distinctly comprehend; and when I could snatch an interval to reply, I have opposed to all this metropolitan happiness the quiet bliss of the country.

"Observe, my Sophia," said I, one evening, as we were sitting in the alcove which commanded a beautiful view of the setting sun; "observe how tranquil are my delights: and yet I am happy. Perhaps you will reply, in the words of the poet,

> Where Ignorance is bliss,
> 'Tis folly to be wise.

But mine is the bliss of knowledge, and not of ignorance. True: I am ignorant of all that you have been describing: I am ignorant of the pleasures of protracted vigils, sacrificed at the shrine of folly, luxury, and fashion; I am ignorant of the delights of suffocation in a steaming theatre; of the rush of chariots; the gaze of admiration; the

murmur of applause; and the noise of crowded streets. I am ignorant of the polluted misery of the multitude, of the barbarities of the unfeeling, and the dangers of the helpless: for *these* are parts of that picture which you have so glowingly pourtrayed. Yet I repeat that I am happy, and my pleasures are many. I rise in the morning with unclouded spirits, and with a healthful frame: my mind is not dejected with the memory of the last night's follies, nor enervated by its excesses: I am harassed with no perplexities how I shall outshine a rival or a friend at the next assembly: my recollection is embittered by no taunts from inflated insolence, nor the omission of any fashionable duty: I stand in no fear of being excelled in dress, in dancing, in beauty, or in grace: I am in no fluttering expectation of visits from rival beaus, nor trembling, lest I should be surprised in negligent attire by one who has never seen me but in my

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pride of dress: from these petty but corroding cares I am exempt. Instead of them, I walk forth into my garden in the freshness of the morning; the meanest floweret there, as I look upon it, fills my heart with pleasure; for my hands planted the seed; my hands tended its growth: I watched its opening beauties, and anticipated their maturity. The birds, in the neighbouring fields, teach me my duty to my Creator: their simple notes rise as a song of gratulation to the gates of Heaven: the air rings with joy: all nature rejoices in the return of day, and shall man alone be dumb? I feel, at such moments, sentiments of devotion so warm, so elevated, so majestical, that I am above earthly thoughts; I enjoy an antepast of Heaven.

'As we are strongly disposed, by nature, to sympathise with the state of things around us, so I find myself soothed into tranquillity by the silent loveliness of rural scenery. Every thing around me

me speaks peace to my heart; every thing I behold is calculated to awaken piety and contentment and joy.' Pride has no food here. I cannot look down upon the smiling villagers as they pass me, and swell with self-importance: their healthful look, their cheerful mien, their hardy, invigorated frame, their carols, their coarse but feeling mirth, all tell me that the sanctuary of human bliss, the heart, is unviolated. I exchange, therefore, the sullen comparison of superiority, for the sweet, complacent sensation of equality. We are alike happy: we are alike indebted to one beneficent being for our happiness: we are alike the creatures of his will: we are alike the children of his love. Has the goodness of God conferred upon me temporal blessings with a larger bounty than upon others? I use them then as the means of extending his favour: I consider them, not as a vain basis upon which to elevate myself, but as a new link between me and

and my fellow creatures; a link that unites me in love and fellowship."

I perceived that Sophia was affected, even to tears, at this discourse. I paused for a moment, and then added, "believe me, my dear cousin, it is not in externals that true bliss is to be found. It is not in theatres, assemblies, courts, and card-tables, that we can rear the plant of human happiness: No; it must be sown in solitude, it must be nurtured in silence, it must be freshened by the dews of tranquillity, and it must be warmed by the sun of benevolence and virtue."

"You are to be envied," replied Sophia, "for the power which you possess of acting according to your wishes."

"Rather say I am to be envied, that my father's love and wisdom have excited in me no thoughts that stray beyond the peaceful fields of my birth. He awakened in my soul, such desires only, as could be gratified within that sphere, and therefore am I happy. In

this

this respect, I am favoured beyond you. My uncle is a man of the world. He has passed all the active period of his life in the bustling duties of office, and in the tumultuous pleasures of society. He has no relish, no conception of the delights of retirement, unless it be as a temporary abstinence which may give added keenness to those of the world."

"You are right," answered Sophia, "and being, himself, susceptible of no pleasure from solitude, he has not learned to reflect what may be the wants of others. He insists that I shall partake of all fashionable pursuits; and often do I prepare to accompany him in these pursuits when it would be mercy to let me abstain from them. I do not tell him so, for I know that he acts towards me from excess of love: borne down by the torrent of example, he imagines I should repine if he neglected to afford me every means of pleasure which others enjoy. Nature, however, does not seem

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to second his wishes. My constitution is not calculated to endure the fatigues of such happiness."

"Perhaps," said I, "the love that now persecutes you may become your friend. When he perceives, as surely he must perceive, that he is sacrificing your health, and eventually perhaps your life, to such vain pursuits, he will desist; he will leave you to enjoyments more placid and more congenial."

The evening had now closed in, and we returned towards the house. As we were passing along, a nightingale began to "tune her nocturnal note." The strains were such as might suspend an angel's harmony to listen. I stopped, and addressed Sophia.

"What are all the artful modulations of Catalani, compared to this? What are all her trillings compared to the varied melody of this songstress? Look above you, and behold the cope of heaven thick with innumerable stars: shall

we

we compare with these the effulgence of tapers? Hark to the fountain, as it murmurs through yon woody amphitheatre: with what a native sweetness does it accompany the melancholy strains of Philomela. See where the moon, ascending in her cloudy car, beams o'er the ridge of yonder towering hill: a flood of radiant glory encompasses her, and her beams already dwell upon the distant landscape. What scene, at theatre or ball, can equal this? Have we not here the exhibition of Nature? and is not God the artist? Can the mind, which is capable of feeling all this, find relish in painted canvass, in the dim glare of waxen tapers, in the rapidity of a fiddler's elbow, or the tremulous vibrations of a singer?"

"No," answered Sophia emphatically and was silent.

CHAP. XI.

When we entered the sitting room, we found my father and Sir James Wilmot in political discourse. I was certain that my father had engaged in such discussions with reluctance, for he was accustomed to treat, with some contempt, those persons whose conversation was seldom free from the politics of the day. He considered the practice as essentially hostile to the placid delights of discourse, for it was not often that such topics were agitated without acrimony. *Whig* and *Tory*, *ministerial* and *opposition*, were words seldom heard under my father's roof. He loved his country; he was loyal to his king; he paid his taxes with contentment, for they are a cheap purchase of liberty, and exemption from the horrors of war; he believed that no ministry could ever be dangerously corrupt, for there

there was a remedy in the popular demagogues of the day; he felt the blessings of being an Englishman with proud consciousness; and the bitterest evil he wished those, who had imbibed the vulgar facility of exclaiming against the destruction of our "glorious constitution," was their removal from the British confines.

As we entered, Sir James interrupted the discourse, for a moment, to enquire after the health of Sophia, and my father expressed a hope that she would soon experience the beneficial effects of the country air, a quiet life, and her cousin's company. Sir James assented to this, and then resumed the discourse.

"You must allow," said he to my father, "that the whole course of your life has been such as to foster these opinions. You have lived remote from the world, and from the metropolis. You have not, necessarily, mingled with company in which such discussions prevail, and in which

which you must take a part, or remain silent."

"That, brother, is no proof of its propriety. Such an argument would equally defend a compliance with any vice that happened to be prevalent. But it is the duty of a rational being to examine the motives of his conduct. He is to consider not what others do, but what it becomes him to do. It is the part of a wise man to throw custom, and prejudice, and habit, to his feet, and to estimate human actions by the simple principles of utility and virtue. He will prize the precious hours of existence too highly to give them to frivolous pursuits. He should oppose example to example. We are told that Locke, when invited one evening to meet some learned and ingenious men of his time, was surprised to hear them call for cards. But *he* did not play, because the rest of the company did. He would have disdained to comply with what his reason

son did not sanction. He retired to a corner of the room, and began to write. After a time, the party perceived him, and enquired what he was writing. He replied, with dignity, 'I had formed high expectations, from the discourse that I was to have participated in this evening with so many eminent characters. In that I am disappointed, and I am therefore consoling myself with committing to paper the conversation of which I cannot partake.' He then shewed them how contemptible had been their talk for the last half hour, and they blushed. The cards were thrown away, and the philosopher sat down in a company of men instead of gamblers."

"I admire your illustration," said Sir James, "but I should admire still more that frame of mind which would enable you to enforce it by practice in a company of politicians."

"I do not say," replied my father, "that if I happened to be in the company

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pany of persons who were debating upon the politics of the day, I should reprove them by such, or by any other method. I should probably join with them, as long as good language and good order were preserved; but when a man undertakes to settle the balance of Europe, who shall answer for his intellects? It is certainly a less evil, individually speaking, to prate about cabinets and proclamations, the purity of parliament, and the necessity of reform, than to destroy health, fortune, and peace of mind in the orgies of a gaming table; and *as* the less evil I should prefer it."

"Well," replied Sir James, half sarcastically, "you are to be envied for that pliant, placid, and gentle mind which is so well adapted for happiness. It is liable neither to rise above, nor sink below, the true level of human bliss. You can pass, without difficulty, from one transition to another: from business to books, from books to domestic cares, and from

from these to voluntary labours. You have the happy art of extracting comfort from every thing that surrounds you, by dwelling on the favourable side of things and turning away from the unfavourable."

"Without deserving the whole of your eulogium, I am certainly entitled to a part of it. I do not suffer my peace of mind to be disturbed by foolish anxiety about evils which are merely possible, and which, if probable, can neither be retarded nor hastened by my concurrence or my opposition. For the world, in the ordinary sense of the word, I care little; but in the best sense of it, I make it my umpire and my judge. Abstaining from active politics, and from parties of all sorts, I am secure from the clouds that so often trouble and obscure the atmosphere of other men. I am indifferent whether France be a monarchy or a republic; whether it have an aristocracy or a democracy. Let her but keep within her own

own bounds, and leave this sea-girt isle and its prosperity alone, and I am contented. This is the true arcanum of happiness."

"Yes, but this approaches very near to selfish apathy, I think," replied Sir James.

"Why so? Can I, by sighs, by exclamations, by looks of sorrow, by invective, or by rage, save one life in the field of battle, or rescue one but from destruction. Are the steps of the conqueror to be turned aside by my abhorrence? Is the sword of destruction, when it wastes the land, to be sheathed at my commiseration? Are not the events that I might deplore, passed? What am I, possessing this one spot of the habitable globe, that I should suppose monarchs and armies are to be swayed by me? And if they cannot, do I not discharge a higher duty, by attending to the welfare of myself, my family, and those around me, whom it *is* in my power to assist? Is it not better

ter that I should preserve my mind undisturbed by factious broils, and unavailing sorrow, that it may discharge those duties which it *can* discharge?"

Sir James was silent, and my father, warmed with the subject, continued.

"I cannot sufficiently pity those people who imagine that nothing can go on well unless they interfere; who keep their minds in a perpetual state of confusion and perturbation, by outcries against the ministry, by exclamations of sorrow at their supineness, and by ejaculations of fear lest the enemy should erect the standard of rebellion upon the walls of St. James's! But the evil of these gentlemen would be considerably lessened, if they were content with confining their hopes and fears, their remonstrances and exhortations, their presages and advices to themselves. This, however, never satisfies them. Their friends suffer a martyrdom, unless they happen to be imbued with the same spirit. They meet you in the

street,

street, and detain you a quarter of an hour, with a keen north wind blowing in your face, and volumes of dust into your eyes, by detailing in what manner the French gained the last battle, and how they might have been defeated. They break in upon your moments of retirement to vent their indignation against Fox or Pitt, for having embraced an extravagant side of a question; they keep you an hour or two out of your bed to demonstrate how a new ministry should be formed, and how skilfully the balance of opinion, interest, and influence might be preserved between them, if adjusted after their own manner, they will shew you, with two egg cups, a couple of beer glasses, and half a dozen of egg shells, precisely the manner in which a fort might have been taken, or a town stormed; they will draw lines of circumvallation with beer grouts; they will make a breach through a fortification of cheese parings; and having outflanked an enemy's front, by

by means of a long carving knife, they will throw them into confusion, and, marching over heaps of slaughtered crumbs, scrapings, and crusts, invest the camp, whose hieroglyphic representation is, most probably, a loaf or a beer jug. The victory is now complete, and these bloodless generals retire from the field of combat with as much exultation as Cyrus after the battle of Thymbria, or Hannibal after the slaughter at Cannæ. You will easily recognize this picture, for you as well as myself, have met with many such; indeed, I never knew a man who was much infected with the foolish mania of politics, who did not resemble it more or less. I can only account for this strange passion, from that sophistry, by which man loves to connect his brief destiny with great events, and to move out of the humble sphere to which fortune, birth, or talents may have consigned him. While he thus identifies himself, for a moment, with the great actions of his

 time,

time, he feels a temporary enlargement of character, and fancies that he is really that important being, who can advise legislators, and instruct generals!' Happy deception! which carries a man into senates and council chambers, into camps and battles, and crowns him with the laurel wreath of victory, or invests him with the titles of deliberative wisdom and discretion! So fleeting and so unstable is our happiness, so fluctuating the foundations on which it is built, that I can scarcely condemn the man who seeks to multiply its sources. But this innocent fallacy, by which they blind their own reason, does not content them. They would become the founders of a sect; they would make proselytes; they would propagate their doctrines, and that too with all the zeal of sectaries; they maintain that this spirit of enquiring into the actions of men in power, this child's play of censuring what they do not understand, and of applauding what they are not com-

petent

petent to comprehend; they maintain, that this vigilant inspection of the government, and of continental affairs, is of wonderful use to the nation; it nurtures a spirit of free enquiry; it preserves the bulwarks of our liberty; it serves as a barrier against the encroachments of power; in fine, it is the very salvation of England. Believe me, when I say it, for I speak truly, I have really heard this seriously urged in vindication of these itinerant politicians, these empirical statesmen, these club warriors. I do not wish to deny, that a country must prosper, where every man feels himself, as it were, an individual guardian of its rights; and to feel himself such, he must have a perpetual interest in what relates to them; and if a man think his opinions upon any question of general or particular polity, of sufficient importance to be given to the world, I would by all means advise him to do it, though it is almost a moral certainty that they will sink into oblivion,

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unless proceeding from one whose personal influence, or whose rank and reputation for wisdom can give weight and countenance to them. But that that loquacious species of politics which infests domestic life, which converts a tea-table into a senate, and the supper-table into a camp; that that captious, querulous kind of politics which sees every thing through the mist of disappointment, misery, and tears; that those politics, which fume away only in words, and are meant, in their very spirit, merely to gratify the silly pride, or to humour the foolish habit of an individual; that such politics form the safeguard of a nation, protect the liberties of the people, repress the ambition of the rulers, or defend the rights of nations, I utterly deny. What influence have they? Who is bettered, assisted, or reproved by them? Are they heard by those for whom they are intended? No: they are poured into the ears of patient martyrs, whom kindness renders such,

such, or they are participated by kindred minds, where they revolve for a while, as in a circle, and then sink for ever. They form a sort of epidemic disease in private life, which the infected propagate without mercy, and which the uncontaminated are in danger of catching without their will. If these men formed a separate body, who deliberated together, drew up the results of their deliberations, and presented them, at stated periods, to the world, and addressed in particular to those whom they were meant to benefit; then, indeed, there would be some shadow of excuse for them, and they might urge, with more grace and consistency, the mighty influence they have over the deliberative transactions of the nation. But, as it is, they only excite ridicule in sober-minded men; they vapour away a few hours of existence every day, in imposing upon themselves the most miserable of all fallacies; they fatigue their friends and acquaintance with a quotidian wis-

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dom which none are willing to learn, and which, those only can esteem whose reasons are equally infected with the mania. I would recommend, that all these gentlemen should be incorporated, and wear some distinctive badge, whence they might be known, so that a man would be aware with whom he may be about to contract an intimacy. You will observe, that I would by no means extend this censure to those whom any official situation entitles to be heard; to those whose connections may be the means of having their opinions carried to the proper objects; or to those, who having talents, whatever may be their sphere of life, think that they are in a condition to offer remarks upon what they have long meditated. Such men *ought* to speak or write, for it is a duty which they owe to themselves, to their country, and to the world; and in them, to be silent would be criminal. But I level my fulminations against those unimportant ephe-

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meræ of life, whom neither situation, connexions, nor talents, entitle to be heard, and who, not being able to make the world their auditors, put every good natured man they meet with under contribution, and lay an embargo upon his ears until they are properly freighted with their own merchandize. They are worse than useless; for, in addition to the negative evil of doing no good, they have a positive evil of disturbing life by the diffusion of their idle opinions, and the pertinacity with which they would vindicate their utility. It is this that offends most; mere folly is sometimes tolerable, when counterbalanced, as it frequently is, by good natural and moral qualities: but the despotism of folly, which seeks to impose its laws, and propagate its doctrines among unbelievers, fills the mind with indignation."

"I am afraid," said Sir James, "that like most disputants, we shall each retire with our opinions unshaken. I certainly

do

do think, that in a free country like this, much good may be, and actually is, done, by that tendency to discuss political questions which is so prevalent. There ought to be a kind of moral tribunal, before which rulers and men in power should be amenable; and that moral tribunal is public opinion."

"True," replied my father, "I agree with you, that in questions of public importance, the public voice should be heard. But you confound the people, with a few factious demagogues, or with idle, loquacious individuals, who *will* talk, though they *cannot* comprehend. For example: what benefit would result to this or any other nation, if you and I, and half a dozen more like ourselves, were to sit, till dawn, talking about affairs of state? Each would have a favourite opinion, a favourite measure, or a favourite minister to support: none would be convinced, but all would harangue in their turns; the passions would become inflamed;

flamed; our language would grow intemperate, dissention would ensue, and friendship might be destroyed. And could we afterwards persuade ourselves that we had been securing the prosperity or happiness of the nation? The delusion is too gross, too palpable."

"But," replied my uncle, "if men do not previously consider these subjects, how can they be qualified to act upon them in any great emergency?"

"Let them consider, but not talk," answered my father. "A time may come, in the course of possible events, when it may be necessary for the people of England to debate whether a king shall be expelled from the throne: but it is not therefore necessary that we should *now* talk about the means of obtaining such a circumstance. It *may* happen that rebellion may rear her bloody standard in this country; but let us not already devise the methods of putting it down. Great events stimulate to great exertions. Men

rise

rise in energy as energy is called for. The French revolution has taught us what can be done when the occasion waits. Butchers, bakers, and attornies, headed armies that overthrew the veteran legions and most consummate generals of Europe. Do not defend the practice, therefore, upon the plea of future necessity; a necessity which is but possible, and which, if it ever arrives, will bring its own remedy with it."

"I will not protract a discussion," answered Sir James, "that only gives you fresh opportunities of supporting your argument. Henceforth, however, without condemning snch discourse, I shall have a meaner estimation of its importance."

"I hope you will," replied my father, "and you will then be secure from many anxieties that now needlessly oppress you."

CHAPTER IV.

"YOUR uncle," said my father to me the following morning, as we were walking in the garden, while Sir James and Sophia were gone out to ride, "your uncle, is a man whose notions of wright and wrong are, in general, very exact; but he has been so long habituated to venerate the prescription of custom, and to follow the stream of society, that he is not always aware of the errors or inconsistencies that his conduct sometimes betrays. I remember, when we were at the university together, he was reckoned more docile than myself, because he seldom contended existing practices; and it was prophesied, by those, who, it seems, had not the inspiration of futurity, that he would win his way at court. I believe, however, that he possesses an unbending rectitude of principle, and, that what he believes

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to be right, no earthly power can sway him from. He has read much, and seen more; and I know no man in whose judgment I would sooner confide, when that judgment is made to behold its objects in its proper light."

"He seems," said I, "to have a great benevolence of character, and his mind is well stored with ideas, both from books and observation."

"You are right, and he always appears to the greatest advantage when he is striving to maintain what does not rest upon plain and obvious principles. He has an unaffected deference for my opinion, because he believes that I have trained my mind to a keener perception of the truth by retirement and study: and I have a great respect for his upon all questions that relate to man, as acting from temporary and fluctuating motives."

"I observe, that his notions of education, differ essentially from yours.

Yet Sophia seems to be a very amiable girl."

"Sophia is free indeed, from any glaring errors, but she is not what she might be. She has been educated in too much consciousness of her birth and expectations, and she has been taught to prize the transient joys of wealth and distinction too highly. Sophia has that insipid excellence, which might almost be called constitutional. What she does, seems to proceed from mere habit, and not from any rooted principles; and, consequently, it may be suspected that the *habit* of error and vice might be engrafted upon her. I have very little confidence in the duration of any virtue or virtues that does not flow from such a steady conviction, as is sufficient to counteract any tendency to dereliction. I am not satisfied that a person *does* well; I must be convinced that he *thinks* well. The course of action may be perverted; but thought is a majestic

stream,

stream, that holds it passage onward, and is not to be overcome by petty obstacles. It is for want of these principles, that the conduct of Sophia is often inconsistent; and for want of correction, it is often whimsical."

"She is but young yet, and it may be hoped, that increase of years will give her increase of wisdom. I have conversed much with her, and I am certain that the soil is good, though the growth is not perfect."

"She is the oldest, however, of my brother's family, and as he has several children growing up, they will regard her as a sort of pattern, and it is of importance that she should set them no bad example. It is of importance also, that her brothers and sisters should profit by a better system than she did, and I will take an opportunity of detailing to Sir James, some of those opinions upon education which, I know, by experience, to be beneficial. He will listen to them with pleasure, for

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he has often introduced the topic: a topic, indeed, which must be near the heart of every parent. I hope, by this means, to invite him to amend what is yet defective in Sophia, and to stimulate him to a better method with his other children.'

We now broke off our discourse, for we saw Sir James and Sophia coming up the avenue. They joined us, and I was rejoiced to perceive the rose of health beginning to disclose itself upon the cheeks of the latter.

"I confess," said Sir James, "that a man must be a steady lover of smoke, who would venture to extol London in such a spot as this."

I looked at Sophia, and smiled.

"I have visited London," replied my father, "frequently, but those visits only served to increase my love of the country. A genuine love of rural retirement, however, is unconnected with local beauty: though I admit that the one may be

much increased by the other. He that is formed to receive delight from nature, from solitude, and meditation, would not repine, though his hut were placed in a field, so as it were remote from turbulence, and his eye could be gladdened by surrounding verdure. It is not in the power of things to make us happy, unless we possess and cherish a disposition to happiness."

In the evening, Sir James, by an unexpected coincidence, happened to introduce the subject of education, by observing that he had been reading, just before he left London, a very well written work upon that subject.

"I know of no subject," said my father, "upon which so much has been written, and so little has been done. Every one thinks himself qualified to discuss it, and yet no one, scarcely, attends to its practical importance. There is not, I believe, a duty more sacred, nor one that is more negligently

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and inefficiently performed. Were I asked, in what capacity a human being is called upon to act with all the energies of its nature, I should without hesitation, reply—A PARENT."

I perceived that my uncle and Sophia were, both, much impressed with the solemnity of my father's manner, as he uttered these words; and after a short pause, Sir James observed, that he should be much gratified in hearing some of his brother's opinions, upon a subject, that he was much interested in, and which, he confessed, he had not much thought on. My father gladly assented, and never shall I forget the animation and force with which he spoke. I will, here, give his thoughts, as they occur to my memory, unbroken by any interruptions; for though Sir James frequently made his observations, yet they were never in the form of objections.

"I am hardly conscious," said my

father, "of being able to acquit myself either to your, or my own satisfaction. I have, indeed, often thought upon the subject, but I know that many of my opinions will be deemed heteredox, and as such, you may, perhaps, despise them. Do not forget however, that for myself, I advance nothing but what I firmly believe.

"I shall not give you a complete treatise, but only advert to a few general topics, such as have frequently occurred to me in moments of solitary meditation. I have read Locke, but his system is not free from some childish prejudices. Milton's invaluable little Tractate contains an excellent outline of intellectual education: but he has left the moral and the natural kingdoms of man to waste. Rousseau's is the moſt complete; but, joined with some noble delineations and manly characteristics, there are many parts so extravagantly absurd, and so minutely puerile, that it excites our wonder

wonder when we behold such elevations and depressions of the same mind. Of the modern systems that have been fabricated; you will not be surprised if I say nothing.

"Still, however, when I have, myself, meditated upon this subject, it has struck me, that after all that has been said by these celebrated writers, some parts were yet susceptible of a different elucidation. I believe, indeed, that to no two minds does the same subject of contemplation appear precisely the same: whence the difficulty (perhaps impossibility) of attaining that certainty in moral results, which we expect, and obtain, in physical ones. Yet, it must be confessed, that some see clearer than others, and form more accurate ideas of the objects they are viewing; the passions operate less forcibly upon some than upon others: and he who thinks in a *detached* manner, if I may so express myself, is more likely to arrive at truth than

than he who sets out with a preconceived system. A system is a Procustean bed; it becomes a standard of admeasurement, and every thing we contemplate, is viewed, not in its real and absolute proportions: not in its relative fitness, but according as it exceeds or falls short of our arbitrary line. It is impossible that a man who sits down with a determined system in his head should ever reach the general and sublime truths of moral science. From this error I hold myself perfectly free, and this exemption I claim upon solid ground. I have never meditated long or deeply enough upon any subject, to erect the intricate fabric of a system. What I have therefore to say, will assuredly be the unsophisticated sentiments of my mind.

"And here I cannot but remark, how rare it is to meet with a *rational* parent. We have often discoursed together upon the disgusting conduct of those, who, blind even to fatuity, hold up their

poor

poor children to the world, as paragons and models. With the exception of yourself, I never yet saw that father or mother, who did not, in this particular, offend against common sense. How many blockheads have I heard praised for sagacity; how many infantile frivolities have I seen admired as delightful; how many tales have I heard repeated of lovely boys and charming girls, at which politeness itself could not smile, nor adulation pour forth one applauding word; how many rude, pert, and disgusting children have I known to be praised and so admired, for their sweet manners and pretty innocent openness, that I have felt ashamed to see such broad marks of folly written upon the brow of man; how often have I seen the sickly puny offspring of a cold, diseased embrace, led forth to public notice, and pompously exhibited with the poor hope of hearing them flattered; and when that hope has been frustrated by the strong dictates of unbending truth,

their

their parents have not blushed to extort assent to their own lavish commendations. Sad, yet wise condition of human nature! that our very duties can be performed only by the operation of self-delusion. Nature's law has kindly so ordained it, that a parent's eye shall know no deformity; or were it not so, where would poor and helpless infancy turn for mercy and protection? Yet, why obtrude this feeling upon the world? Cherish it, and let its operation be as effective as the interests of nature and humanity demand; but as it contains, in its very essence, an infatuation which must offend every sober eye, let it be veiled from public sight. Parent themselves seem not aware of the feelings it excites; indeed they cannot, for such is the morality of civilised life, that we hold it as a part of our duty to throw a gloss over our real thoughts, and to present them only under certain lights and shades. He would be considered

as brutal who should not reflect the smile of a father's delight, when he presents his hopeful offspring to the eyes of admiring guests. While this complacency continues to be the creed of polished life, the evil admits of no remedy; we must patiently endure the follies that insult our understanding; and believe, upon the credit of fathers and mothers, that every child is beautiful as opening day, and an infant Newton in sagacity. Draw *your* inductions from *their* data, and the hardiest champion of truth would not dare to maintain that there exists an ugly or a stupid darling on the face of the earth.

" The education of man naturally divides itself into three sorts—physical, moral, and intellectual. Of the first, I freely confess it appears to me there is nothing to be added; Locke and Rousseau have anticipated every point of importance, and a child who is nurtured after their precepts would have no reason to complain of a sickly constitution, or ill wrought

wrought frame. Indeed, a sort of revolution seems already to be taking place in favour of their principles; the distortions of art, and the destructive kindness of foolish affection are declining; and it is no longer a chimerical hope, that the reign of nature may be restored. It will happen neither in your time nor in mine; but it is some consolation that we can sink into the grave with the pleasing expectation that our posterity will feel blessings which the progressive operations of improvement could not procure for their fathers.

"But in our moral structure, which is incalculably more important than either of the other two, there yet exist endless and radical defects, which not only impede the building from reaching its full and native height of beauty, but threaten, with ruin, those parts, which are already erected. Let it but for a moment be considered of what eternal consequence it is to man, both in this world and the

world

world to come, that his heart should receive the most unbounded cultivation; and our surprise will be converted into sorrow, when we see it so lamentably neglected. This part of education, which commences almost with the birth of a child, and continues to the last, I have never yet seen properly conducted. The present system is one replete with hypocrisy, fraud, contradictions, and weakness; it is essentially hostile to every thing open, candid, and ingenuous. That sickly kind of virtue which grows out of precept and obedience will never thrive any longer than while vigorously attended to; but let it be grafted upon the firm stock of reason, and cherished for its intrinsic worth; and then it may flourish in perennial beauty amidst storms and ruin. It is at this period, that the work of education must commence; it is then that we must lay the seeds of whatever plants we wish to spring up in after life. We do not pay sufficient attention

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to the ground work: in general, this part of our education begins just at that very period when it ought to cease; we leave the tender, pliant years of infancy to run riot, and branch into a thousand errors and inconsistencies; and then, when a being ought to think and act for himself, we are busied in eradicating obstinate prejudices, the result of our own mismanagement, and inflict upon our children the evils which flow from our own folly. We amuse them with a sort of raree-show exhibition of life; we hold before their eyes distorted pictures daubed with false and glaring colours; we familiarise their minds with representations that have no existence in the world they are destined to act in; and when these miserable victims of deception escape from the plastic hands of their father or tutor, they sink at once into an inextricable labyrinth woven by folly, prejudice, and dogmatism. On the moving scenes of existence, which are passing

passing before them, they look with a curious and enquiring eye; but their hearts cannot yet sympathize with what is new to their senses and foreign to their feelings; they sigh for the happy delusions of their youth, and look back, with anguish upon the airy visions which their fantastic fancies had woven. While they deliberate, the stream of life is passing quickly on; the crowd that presses around, hurries them in this or that direction, as accident may conspire; they are not the creatures of their own choice, but become the passive instrument of those that surround them; even while they know that another road would lead to happier spots, they feel also that it is now too late to return, and recommence the journey of life; they continue to move along without motive and without choice, till at last they drop into the waves of oblivion, and make room for some other being, just as mechanical and just as deluded. Is not this a true pic-

ture

ture of the life of thousands? Beings, who know neither whence they came, how they came, nor whither they are going? They are like a man who sees a crowd running beneath his window: at once he rushes out, and mingles with them; runs as they run, and hopes at last to find something, though he knows not what, that shall repay his labour; too often he meets with disappointment and vexation! Who does not wish that this were otherwise? and who does not see that this is so, merely because man is educated as a machine, and not as a rational and active being?

"In the education of your child, let him not, if it be possible, take a single step upon the mere authority of precedent or precept. Accustom him in every action he performs, to be ready to assign the motive when called upon; and this may be done by a process as easy as teaching him his alphabet. Let caprice, humour, indolence, have no empire in his breast.

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I would not have him discard, even a plaything, from the mere wantonness of satiety; the favourite lap-dop does no more when he ceases to play with the cork or ball upon your parlour-carpet; but the distinctive faculty of reason demands from its possessor a nobler motive for conduct. The only dependence he should ever be taught or ever feel, should be that of *himself*; not that he is to be a lawless orb, running at will; where this is the case, it proceeds only from the stupidity of a bungling operator; you, in fact, guide all his motions, point out his path, urge or restrain his course; but let this controul be dexterously concealed; let him not see the strings by which he is moved, but, fancying himself free, acquire the feelings of freedom. The madness of theory alone could wish the removal of restraint and direction over the conduct of youth; nature and reason alike condemn so monstrous an hypothesis; but it is the error of our management

management that we surround it with *visible* constraint and command; and, by perpetually reminding our children that it is we who shape their steps, that it is we who watch over, protect, and guard them, deprive them of the first principle of an independent and vigorous mind—the feeling that protection in danger, or assistance in difficulty, can proceed only from themselves. It is this that enervates the heart, and makes it lean for support, through life, on some object weak and feeble as itself. A child so educated (and every child is so educated) has no motive, no occasion for calling into action the vigorous energies of his mind: he is a dependent being in every sense of the word, and trembles to stand alone: his reason, that active, that creative principle in the soul of man, lies dormant; and when he comes forth into the world, he is unable, all at once, to resuscitate its springs, and bring them into play. Hence the mechanism of society; and

and hence the difficulty, not to say impossibility, of electing our sphere of action; of feeling ourselves the architects of our fortune, the arbiters of our own conduct. Not, therefore, till we educate our children as beings, who are one day to be men, shall we behold men in the walks of life: the poor shadow, that glides along now in his silken, holiday clothes, and boasts that proud title, only excites our pity, when we think that the same materials compose his frame that were mingled in the composition of Lycurgus and Scipio, of Hannibal and Cæsar!

"You will perhaps smile, when I say that the education, which would form a man, must commence with the first months of his existence; yet it is so, and our blindness to this truth is the principal source of the many subsequent errors which arise. Methinks I hear you say, at this period, caudles and confections, pap and boiled milk, should be the principal objects of our attention. But he

must

must be a very inattentive observer of nature indeed, who cannot perceive, even in this early stage of infancy, the germs, the buds of those passions which afterwards form the character; and to the cultivation, to the direction, to the repression of these passions, our first endeavours should be directed. A child at three or four months old, gives abundant proof that the first instinctive operations of intellect are exerted; and in many cases we find these operations accompanied with all the characteristics of volition. Feelings of preference and dislike, of approbation and anger, are hourly manifested at this age, and in these feelings are often observable the petulance of capricious desire I have, very attentively, observed children of this and the subsequent stages of existence, and I speak confidently. I do not say that we can operate a *present* change upon the disposition of so young an infant; that can be done effectively only at an advanced

vanced period: but I maintain that it is of the utmost importance to repress the first-growth of those weeds which hereafter we strive in vain to tear up by the roots. It not only simplifies the business to the parent, but produces permanent and absolute good, by the constant application of those corrections which act more effectually by a gradual process than by violent transition and persecuting severity. To the importance of this early watchfulness, none seem sufficiently to advert. What, in mature life, we denominate a good or a bad, an open or insidious temper, is nothing but these primal feelings, settled into habit from unrestrained indulgence, and, according as they are either amiable or hateful, producing correspondent characteristics in the mind; these habits, ultimately, generate the principles of conduct by which he is actuated through life, and thus stamp an indelible impression which time nor accident can rarely obliterate. Sometimes, indeed, the whole

 moral

moral system of an individual may be partially altered by the influence of strong causes indissolubly connected with his interest and welfare; but this does not often happen; and even could it always take place, still it would furnish no argument why those passions should be fostered to-day which we know to-morrow must be destroyed; for do we not thus suffer many of the most valuable years of life to lie waste, which a prudent cultivation would prepare for early and excellent fruit? But, since it is almost a moral certainty, that subsequent exertions cannot eradicate the first impressions stamped upon our minds and hearts, it becomes of the most incalculable importance that we should pay an early regard to this part of education. A child who is capable of feeling pleasure or pain at any given event, is capable, to a certain degree, of volition, and of the simplest operations of intellect. He is able to distinguish between two objects, and in distinguishing,

guishing, to determine their respective worth, relatively to himself; accordingly, if one be presented to him he is pleased; if the other, he is displeased. The moment reason has advanced thus far, that moment, I say, the moral education should commence; and in nine cases out of ten, I have seen this progress of reason take place before the eighth month. Then begins our work; it is for us to determine what shall be granted and what denied, and to erect a barrier against the influence of caprice; to wrestle with the first contentions for mastery which betray themselves in every peevish tear that follows a refusal. Mothers and nurses, I know, will exclaim against the cruelty of denying the poor little dear infant; pronounce you hard-hearted, unfeeling; mind it not; let the storm rage, but proceed steadily in your path, and be assured, that every tear your infant sheds, waters a bed of roses which will bloom with captivating beauty; while

while every smile that succeeds the completion of capricious desire, is a hot and fecund sun which ripens into maturity the nettle and the weed. I repeat it; it is not that we can affect an immediate reformation, for we well know, that the child who cries this moment, from unsatisfied desire, will do the same the next, and the next, when the motive prompts him: but be not therefore discouraged: you know well there are but two ways by which an idle habit can be corrected in a child; by corporeal punishment, and this degrades the mind while it smarts the body, and rarely produces the intended effect; or by a rational process of argument and conviction, and this betters the heart, gives a child a feeling of himself which swells him with conscious pride, instils into him the manly motive *why* he should change his conduct, and makes that change permanent from the demonstrated necessity of it. Now corporeal punishment,

ment, which, in every cause, and at every age, should be resorted to with hesitation, and only as the strongest mark of infamy and displeasure, is altogether out of the question towards an infant; the barbarian who could lift his hand against a helpless child in its mother's arms, (and I have seen such), disgraces humanity. A ratiocinative process, it is needless to say, is impracticable: it therefore only remains, that with steady perseverance we maintain the negative punishment of inhibition, and never, in a single instance, let the tears of a child prevail; he who does that, engenders a contentious spirit, which will hereafter drive him to the necessity of harsher corrections, and his offspring will thus suffer for the error which his parent has entailed upon him. Let every thing be conceded to a child as the most decided gift of your own free will; I would even detain from it whatever seemed to excite in its breast any uncommon anxiety. It is to be remembered

that

that the petulant humours of children are not so much the expressions of desire, as the marks of a heart swelling with vexation at humbled dominion. The very object which calls forth its exacerbations, is often no sooner possessed than thrown away; but the sullen joy remains of having triumphed, and the feeling strikes deeper root, which propels it again to riot, and again to triumph. It is often a melancholy sight to see the wretched infatuation of parents. Master Tommy, at eight months old, is bid to beat mamma, to scratch nursee, to shew papa what a passion he is in, by distorting his body, and assuming all the external contortions of anger; and all this denotes a spirit! all this is indicatory of fire and manly courage! You will hardly believe that such a horrid delusion can exist; but I have repeatedly seen this miserable farce played off; have seen it presented to friends and guests as something praiseworthy and amazingly curious.

ous. The poor deluded parents seem not to know that they are fostering the seeds of filial disobedience, of headstrong obstinacy, of hateful passion; and that the day may come, when the Master Tommy, whose baby hand beat mamma and scratched nursee, may stick thorns in the breast that bare him, and plant care upon the brow that now smiles upon his infant pertness; that he may scald, with the hot tears of parental anguish, the eyes which now look fondly on his little ways, and tear to an early grave the heart that now beats high with rapture at his prattling voice.

"Upon this early education I have been led the more forcibly to insist, because I have hitherto seen it universally neglected. But I am strongly convinced that it is the most important part of all, and forms the foundation upon which we are to erect the future superstructure. In the conduct of it, however, much discrimination is necessary. It has been supposed

posed that man, at his birth, receives within him the principles of that disease which sooner or later terminates his life; it grows and expands with him, 'till at last it marks his body for the grave. Even so, perhaps, we receive in our mother's womb, the germ of some master passion, that lends a colour to every action of our life; this passion may be modified, it may be altered, may be almost destroyed, by particular circumstances; but still there will always appear some effect of its operation. Cæsar would have been the first man in a country village, if a fortuitous concurrence of causes had not made him the tyrant of Rome: Milton, in the twelfth century, would probably have been the most learned monk of his time. This predominating passion can never be totally destroyed, but may be, and often is, so disguised, and concealed by the selfish ones which spring up in our progress through life, that it is not only hidden

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from common eyes, but the possessor himself is scarcely conscious of its existence. To say that a child is born with a good or bad disposition, is to talk absurdly; good and bad are merely relative terms; the aspiring restlessness of genius, which agitates one man, leads him to fame and wealth; this passion in the breast of a cobler, impels him to forsake his stall, and die with a musquet in his hand. The passion is the same; the object only is altered. In the former we dignify it with ambition; in the latter we degrade it with the appellation of lazy indolence, which would rather follow a drum than work. The rich man, who risks ten thousand pounds in some adventure, and succeeds, is called prudent, and praised for his foresight. The poor man, who tries his ten pounds in some speculation, equally specious, and fails, is branded as an ideot or a spendthrift, who throws away his hard-earned gains in the foolish expectation of acquiring

quiring wealth by some lucky stroke; here too, the passion is the same; avarice is the motive; but the results differ, and the motive accordingly assumes a different name. We are not,' therefore, to consider whether this or that bias be good or bad, abstractedly speaking, but whether they are likely to produce, upon the whole, more evil than advantage to our offspring, in their destined walk of life: it is this, and this alone, that must determine their fitness and propriety. A tradesman, who intends to bring his son up to his own business, does well to instil into him habits of regularity, of lying, of quiescency, and prudence, when, perhaps, the reverse of these is discernable in his character; the lawyer, who would make his son a counsellor, does well to nurture sophistry, collusion, and impudence; the embryo soldier may be allowed to swagger at his father's table, and hector over the servants; but when you wish to produce a simple, upright, manly,

manly, and energetic character, avoid all *professional* shoals, and lay early your foundations. There is, however, a nicety required in distinguishing what is the master passion; and, even when discovered, there is a still greater nicety required in managing it properly. He who should treat, in a converse manner, the headstrong, fiery, ungovernable spirit, and the modest, meek, fearful, and timid character, would make the one a tyrant, and the other a slave. Observe nature well; and at no period can she be better observed, than when the customs of society, and the social feelings, have not yet commenced their ravages in the heart. Mould the character of your son according to the moral atmosphere he is to breathe, and the climate he is to endure. Avoid the necessity of violent transitions, by an equable procedure in the intended path, from your outset; it is much easier to enter the road of virtue at first, than it is to quit for it that of error; for then

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we have so many hedges and ditches, so many briars and brambles, and so many perplexities to surmount, that it requires no common degree of fortitude to persist until we succeed.

"As the opening faculties expand; as the mind unfolds itself, and displays its more complicated powers, our task becomes proportionably more intricate and more important. That restless curiosity which is the natural and indelible characteristic of a rational being now becomes a sort of *primum mobile.* A child, as he advances in years, is incessantly employed in acquiring ideas which have a decided influence upon his after life. Every thing he sees, every thing he hears, is a stimulus to desire; that desire will be satisfied either by its own imperfect operations, or by the assistance of the ripened faculties of those who surround him. This curiosity is a vague and uncertain power; it is a machine possessing vast energies, but requires skilful hands to direct it. According

cording to its application, depends either the salvation or perdition of its owner, yet at the same time its owner is incompetent to conduct its movements *. This necessarily devolves upon us; it is we who must wield it, and woe to our offspring if it be wielded injudiciously. Action is but ideas embodied, and he who

* Here I think it necessary to observe, that my father meant this reasoning to apply only to civilised life. In a state of nature, all these complex motions are done away; man is a simple and energetic being, acting vigorously in a small circle; he sees and comprehends at once the results of whatever he does. It is not so with civilised man; he acts in darkness and uncertainty; he is floating in a sea of passion, where contrary winds for ever blow; the utmost he can do is to form probable conclusions from the conduct he may be engaged in, and he is often astonished to find how widely the actual results differ from those he had expected. The connecting causes of these results he rarely ever beholds; and he sits down in supine contentment a being of chance, resolved, since he cannot shape his destiny to his plans, to adopt his plans to his destiny. Such a man is any thing but independent, in the legitimate sense of the word. N.

who has these ideas radically erroneous, will for ever carry lamentable marks of it in his conduct. If a child be suffered to grow up in habits of error, with false notions of man, with extravagant ideas of himself, with incorrect conceptions of his functions and his place in this world, it is an utter impossibility ever to make that child a useful or a virtuous member of society.

"Without commenting upon the endless train of inconsistencies and errors, which is allowed to creep into our ideas of inanimate nature, for they are of subordinate importance, it will be necessary to consider the manner in which we allow our children to form notions of the moral beings they see acting about them. This is the rock which is to be avoided: it is during this initiation, that we lend a sanction to the most monstrous absurdities; we steep the heart with corruption, and suffer every wild, every useless, every poisonous plant to take root. I confess

confess the evil I here complain of appears to me to be almost beyond the power of remedy, for, with whatever caution and labour, we may strive to form a liberal character imbued with precise and just notions, yet, in the jostling of the world, whose movements are beyond our empire, and in which, nevertheless, our pupil must mingle, it amounts to a certainty that part will be wholly effaced, part corrupted, and scarcely one lineament will preserve its just and legitimate aspect. Unless we could form a world accurately adapted to our own views; unless we could inspect the human heart, ascertain its most private impulse, and see its most hidden spots, unless we could mould every man to a nice adaptation to our own machine, it is evident, that take what pains we will, there will constantly be a counteraction of our labours; there will be a silent, a gradual, but an effective deterioration of them; the stream that we

opened pure at its source will become adulterated in its progress, and its waters will insensibly lose their lustre, and their healthful flavour. But man is not to sit down despairing and irresolute, because there is an impassable barrier placed to his exertions beyond which he cannot penetrate: let him look about and see how few come even within sight of this boundary: let him consider what abundant beauty and sweetness are to be found on its confines only, and what relative perfection crowns the labours of him who reaches to its very spot; and then he will find enough that is worth striving for.

"All error is prejudicial, but all moral error is awfully so. This point of education which has for its object the initiating youth into the real and living world, which is to teach him the distinctions of society, and his own sphere, within its pale, is so refined, and so delicate, is attended with so much inevitable

table ambiguity, that I am almost more surprised, any one should succeed, than that such myriads fail. The cause of this infrequency of success has often a deeper and more remote foundation than most men suspect, because few men are willing to perceive it. It lies in our own incompetency; the error, which we are so careful to remove has been propagated from sire to son with unwearied assiduity, and is so inwoven in our frame, mingles so intimately with all our perceptions, that we are not conscious of its existence, except by a process of reasoning, which some men cannot, and some men will not perform. Involuntary error loses its name; voluntary error is a serious crime, even when we confine it to our own breast; but when we would establish it in the breasts of our children, it is a blasphemy against nature. The distinctions of society create a variety about a child, which stimulates him to perpetual observation and enquiry. He

sees the effects, but is unconscious of the causes; to acquaint him with these causes, devolves upon us; but it is an arduous task; beware how you familiarize him too soon with the artificial discrepancies of mankind! The species of moral incertitude and deception which I have alluded to, I will endeavour to illustrate by a familiar example.

" As long as vice and virtue have names and existence, it may be generally asserted, that the company of servants has an unfavourable influence upon the minds of children. That it *has* this influence is certain, and it does not diminish the evil to say that it flows from ourselves; the cause of it is evident: master and servant are two stations, which cannot have two feelings in common; the interests, the desires of each are in perpetual hostility against each other. The very best servants are but the evils of luxury and wealth, but they have long since become necessary evils to a majority

jority of mankind, and as such they must find a place in the map of civilised life. The Cynic Philosopher of Sinope has told us, that a wise man, to be happy, must render himself independent of men, in shaking off their prejudices, their customs, and even their laws, when not conformable to his knowledge; he should also be independent of himself, in opposing his body to all the rigours of the seasons, and his soul to all the pleasures of life. But this wholesome wisdom has lost its relish among men; we surround this poor earthly tenement with all the props of lavish wealth, and live and move in such a purchased slavery, that not a wish is born, whose fruition does not rest upon our fellow creatures. We widen the circle of dependence till its limits are no longer visible; we strike its roots to the very centre of our being, twine them round every nerve, mingle them with every drop of blood, and when inconstant fortune, in her giddy vortex,

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hurls us from our post, we perish like the scattered oak rived by the shaft of heaven. But this eternal ravage finds no place in the energetic breast of steady independence; if the bolt of accident smite him, he rises from the fall; if the storm roar around him, he breasts its fury: he may bend to the very earth, but the elastic vigour of his frame rises from the shock, and stands firmly as before. He is like a lion caught in the toils of the hunter; in his shackles his heart is undaunted; the fire of his eye is unquenched; the roarings of his voice are unbroken. Such a man has a pride of character about him which makes him disdain the petty helps of art; he feels that he is every thing to himself, and can shape his destiny to his will; and such a man, my friend, would not be seen surrounded by perfumed coxcombs, glittering in tawdry lace, gibing with insolent scorn, and cringing, with so debased a humility, that an honest man feels a

pang

pang at his heart when he beholds them. But from this picture of fancied perfection let me return to life and reality.

"Since it must be confessed, that the morals and habits of servants, generally speaking, are injurious to the minds of youth, how shall we impress a child with an idea of this? Shall we, like the Spartans, exhibit before him vice in its native and undisguised colours? Surely not: he would be unable to comprehend that it is vice, since he knows not yet the vocabulary of life. Besides, the very worst errors of servants are often merely negative; they are only the lawful arms of their profession, as boasting is of the traveller, or lying of the tradesman. He whom a master deems a bad servant, would be, and probably may be, an honest member of society in any other rank of life. The heart remains uncorrupted; the manners, indeed, have assumed the tinct native to their sphere; but he only acts as he thinks he ought to act

act in the allotment assigned him by Providence; and, in an analogous manner, every man acts the same. But still *his* system must remain a distinct one, and cannot coalesce with ours; it is therefore necessary, in some way or other, to secure our offspring from the certain evils which attend a promiscuous intercourse with that class of people. The task is extremely difficult; a man who is known as a robber, as a murderer, as a lyàr, as a hypocrite, as a cheat, can be designated distinctly, and, by an easy process, you can demonstrate the validity of your inhibition of any connection with such a man. But with your servants the case is otherwise: there is no one crime, in the just sense of the word, which marks him out for opprobrium; for if there were, it is evident he would be your servant no longer. Yet there is a general tenor of character, arising from obvious and necessary causes; there is a pervading contagion; a miasm continually flying

ing off, but from no perceptibly infected spot, which taints the moral atmosphere of youth, and from which it is our indispensable duty to secure them. All the difficulty is, lest, in guarding them from one corruption, you sow another more fatal; lest you infect the mind with diseased ideas which will operate more widely than the injury you are so sedulous to escape. Let us consider what is the usual way adopted by parents: at least, the way which I have heard a hundred times, and which I believe to be as general as the "casing air."

"A mother or father calls their children to them: "My dears, I desire that "you do not go down into the kitchen; "you must not be with the servants; "they are vulgar, bad people, not fit for "you: they are poor, ignorant persons, "they will teach you all sorts of wicked- "ness; they are not your equals. Never "pay any attention to what they say; "they

"they always tell lies." To such an harangue the poor children listen with patient obedience, and promise compliance with filial duty. But Heavens! what can be more absurd? In what manner will they comprehend your admonitions? They are utterly beyond their conceptions. Why am I not, they ask themselves, to play, to talk, to be familiar with the servants? Because they are *poor?* What is poverty, that it makes this mighty difference? they appear to me the same sort of beings as myself; the same as my father and mother; the same as my brothers and sisters. To be sure, *Thomas* has a red cape and cuffs to his coat, which my papa has not; and *Betty* is not half so finely dressed as my mamma. But what then? Does that alter them? They eat, they drink, they sleep, they walk, they talk, they do every thing the same as we. It is impossible their clothes can make such a difference. "They are ignorant;"—

norant;"—but yet I find they know more than I do. "They are not my equals:" —ah! that I cannot comprehend.

"These thoughts pass in the mind of a child, and he is unable to reconcile them. Perhaps he asks you farther, *why* the servants are unfit company for him. Beware how you answer that question; beware how you tell him that they are *your* servants, because they are poor; that this poverty makes them not his equals; that it degrades them in the scale of rational beings; that being servants, they cease to be men; that they are now subservient to your will and pleasure, and have no longer a will or pleasure of their own. A child that should be taught this unfeeling, this detested lesson, would have the seeds of despotism and tyranny implanted in his breast at once; he would establish the word "poverty" in his mind, as synonimous with baseness and crime; he would swell with hateful self-import-

ance;

ance; he would look down with piercing contempt upon all whom the eternal destiny had launched into an humbler sphere; he would confound, for ever, two ideas, which are, and must be, distinct; he would tread the poor man to the dust, and look upon himself as a being of a superior order: the rank weed thus planted in his heart, would prosper with dreadful energy, and its noxious vapours would impregn every emotion springing from the same soil. To every father, to every mother, I would address myself! I would conjure them, by the solemn feelings which swell my bosom as I utter this, to pause ere they pour the stream of knowledge o'er the youthful mind; to tremble as they approach that confine which separates man from man; and to proceed with fearful caution in the road that leads him to the knowledge of life and its thousand discrepancies. The hope of their declining years depends upon it; the prosperity of their offspring

rests

rests upon it; and according to their progress, their child is to prove a living stream of comfort and delight, or to roll a fetid and a poisonous wave through the road of life!

"It is sometimes easier to point out errors than to suggest remedies; but in the present case it is not so. Among the many which present themselves I will mention one. You may, with perfect propriety, assign, as a reason for your inhibition, the necessity that servants should attend to their domestic occupations; that as they have generally sufficient concerns to occupy them, the time spent upon your children must necessarily be taken from what ought to be otherwise devoted. This is perfectly suitable to the comprehension of a child, and would appear a perfectly valid reason. Having assigned this motive for your interdiction, you may evince, by your conduct and countenance, that you rather approve of any other method of spending their time than with the servants.

vants. Children are sensible of the smallest alteration in the look or behaviour of those who surround them; and if they find, *invariably*, a diminution of kindness, less cheerfulness, a face without smiles, whenever they come from the servants, they would soon endeavour to penetrate the cause of it, and they would as soon discover the real one. To add the conviction of example to your precept, you might also contrive that some necessary office or attention about the children, usually performed by the servants, should be omitted, and assign as the cause of this omission, their injudicious occupation, in idle talk, of the time which ought to have been given to this business. Such little events speak with decided force to the minds of youth. But there is a negative remedy, perhaps more efficacious than all. It is, carefully to provide occupation for your children, and to let their amusements be designedly carried on at a distance from the possible intermingling of

of servants. This, without seeming to have any end in view, does in fact compass the hardest; it destroys the possibility of danger, by a process which carries no suspicion, no deleterious tendency, either on its face, or in its operation. It is abundantly easy in a well-managed family, and I am firmly persuaded it would be attended with every desirable consequence.

"On this subject I have yet another remark to make. Never suffer your child to speak in a haughty, taunting, or insolent manner to a servant: this is not only pernicious to your offspring, but it is cruel, it is unfeeling to your domestics. Remember they are men, and have the hearts and feelings of men; and though hard poverty may bid them stifle the indignant emotion in their bosom, which such tyranny excites, yet they must writhe beneath its envenomed sting; and poor, indeed, is that being who can meanly insult another because he is secure from retaliation. Humanity should

breathe liberal as the air of heaven: like the dew which quickens as well the floweret of the valley as the mountain-ash, it should descend a healing balsam upon the hearts of the poor, to soothe the sorrows which a churlish world but too often throws upon them. But this hateful practice is as unjust as it is illiberal and unmanly; for the servant who does his duty, who performs the part allotted to him on the jostling theatre of life, is as a man, nothing inferior to his master. Often has my gall o'erflown, and my very frame trembled with indignation to see the proud insolence with which an upstart urchin, a very stripling, has taunted the grey hairs of age, and used less ceremony of voice in his commands to his father's domestics than he would to his favourite horse or hound. Oh! I could weep to see a son of mine so lost to manly sentiment, so infected with the hot fever of dominion! Such licence inspires him too with extravagant ideas of

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his own importance, which is a fatal error in education. Whatever may be the expectations of a child, while he *is* a child, make him feel his own moral dependence; you will find that, in spite of all your endeavours, he will soon enough assume the externals of pride and authority.

"I feel, that were I to give free vent to all the thoughts that crowd upon me, in considering this part of education, I should insensibly and unavoidably become too prolix for discourse. To me it appears that every thing, which can be of importance to man, must take root, thrive, and flourish within this circle; this is the foundation and the building, the rest is but the ornament and the decoration. Much will naturally suggest itself to a parent of sound mind, from the accidental occurrence of events which may demand an especial application of remedies; and much, which cannot be foreseen, must be left to the gradual ac-

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cumulation of experimental wisdom. Yet there are two topics connected with this division of my subject, which I cannot refrain from adverting to, and the desultory manner in which I have hitherto treated it, will permit me to mention them in this unconnected way.

"You will have seen already, that I am particularly anxious to have every thing avoided which can tend to enervate the minds of children, or to generate a sickly tone of feeling; this makes them, in all their after life, poor, unsubstantial shadows, trembling at the lightest breeze of accident. Strive to infuse manly sentiments; strive to destroy that strong tendency, which we all have, to magnify our calamities, and lay the feelings of others under contribution. Teach them to despise pity as shown towards themselves; teach them to look upon it as a feeling mingled with something of contempt; but while you elevate their pride of character above the humble suppli-

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cant for words of condolence, and looks of commisseration, cherish the feeling in their own breast which would lead them to sigh for the sorrows of mankind. They may give the alms, which they would scorn to receive; they may be the protectors, but shrink from being the protected. To produce this stern, yet valuable quality, rests totally with us; it is we who must impart firmness to the heart and mind, by our own conduct. Instil into them a contempt of corporeal pain, by seeming yourself to hold it lightly. Sickness and disease are the natural concomitants of man; but in well-educated children, physically speaking, they are seldom found. However, there are diseases which are coincident with this age; there are others which flow from improper food, and the destructive kindness of blind affection. Let, however, the pain, the illness, proceed from what it may, they are not to be remedied by the whining accents of condolence; they are to

be removed either by the free operations of nature, or the salutary applications of art. Why would you effeminate the minds of your children, by magnifying their terrors? If they happen to have a catarrh, or a head-ache, the whole house is in alarm; every thing is in motion; the mamma "yells out syllables of dolour," and puts on such a sorrow-speaking countenance, as could not be exceeded were the last agonies approaching. Children are consummate hypocrites. I have sometimes been amused, sometimes indignant, to mark their deceptive characters. Watch the countenance of a child, when it comes to tell you it has a head-ache, or any other corporeal ache to which this tenement is subject. If the person to whom it complains, treats their malady with indifference, they themselves think lightly of it; but should he assume a sorrowing countenance, if he extend his arms to receive the little invalid, if he mourn over it with all the vociferations of distress, that moment

ment, that very moment, the child becomes more clamorously ill, probably bursts into tears, and with all the cunning hypocrisy of practised delusion, dresses its little face in borrowed anguish, and fills its mouth with half-suppressed groans and accents of pain. I have seen this often. I have tried many children in this particular, with the special purpose of ascertaining the fact; and I am persuaded, that in every case, which is intended to move compassion, and to call forth indulgent fondness, children are perfect masters of deceit. The same child, who, complaining, is dismissed with a slight remark, "that it will go off again," and returns to its playmates with an unclouded brow, would, if dandled, coaxed, and commisserated, lye on your lap in all the mimic sorrows of corporeal anguish. Another proof of this I will adduce from my own repeated experience. In a family of many children, where one happens to be ill, and is of

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course treated with all the silly exuberance of affection; the others seeing this, and envying the thousand little indulgencies and the numerous dainties which are lavished upon the sick brother or sister, will affect to be ill, will force themselves to cough, will throw a feigned languor over their countenance, and speak in the subdued voice of disease: they will do all this; and I have more than once seen them reap the reward of their successful deception. But does it not present a mournful spectacle to see, even at this early age, the deep cunning of the world, and the hateful endeavour to arrest our feelings of pity, by crafty subtlety and designing collusion? This evil proceeds entirely from our own fatuity. Did we treat these petty calamities, these temporary derangements of health, as they ought to be treated, with indifference, they would have no motive to feign, and when real indisposition took place (which is seldom the case with children) we should

should be more certain of the steps we took. Supposing disease really to exist, what benefit is derived from all the dolorous exclamations, and all the drawling tones of sorrow that can be uttered? It does but enervate and terrify your child. It does but make him a sickly and tottering being, who trembles at the idea of disease, unless he have some bosom to lie his head on, some voice to moan over him. No: discard all these petty weaknesses; accustom your child to feel his own importance; teach him to look with an equal eye upon health and disease; to enjoy the one with temperance, to endure the other with fortitude. It is thus only, that you can nurture his soul to manliness. It is thus only, that you can make him a great, a wise, or a good man. Disease is an external evil which every man should endeavour to view with indifference; I do not speak of the indifference of the Stoics; that is merely a glittering phantom which amuses the mind

mind while looking upon it, but leaves no traces of its presence. It is a picture of ideal excellence, of imaginary perfection, which has yet found no living representative. But I speak of that rational and manly indifference to corporeal malady, which enables a person to bear its pains without degenerating into something that is contemptible and disgusting; it is that independent indifference which teaches a man calmly to endure what cannot be alleviated by exacerbation; and rather to draw consolation and support from the native energies of his own soul, than turn for them to the pity of his fellow-creatures. And this indifference is the fruit of cultivation; its seeds are to be sown in infancy, its first shoots are to be cherished in youth, and in manhood it will bloom a hardy and a towering plant. But never can such a growth take root in the bosoms of our offspring, if we weaken and enervate them by injudicious and causeless compassion;

passion; if we teach them to regard disease as something peculiarly afflicting and solemn; if, in fact, we make it an adequate motive for a total dereliction from all customary modes and procedure. A child so educated will retain, through life, a contemptible dread of sickness, and when it falls upon him, he will become ridiculous in the estimation of all who think, feel, and act as men.

"But this is not enough. Parents are not content with o'er stepping the bounds of common sense when their children are really ill, but they absolutely strive to persuade them into sickness, and, like an importunate lover who construes the refusal of his mistress into an assent, they will receive no denial, but proceed forthwith to fondle and bewail them. Such a dialogue as the following I have heard, I cannot tell you how often. "Come here, my dear Charlotte, you look very pale to-day." Charlotte smiles with all the gaiety of health. "Indeed you do; your eyes are

are heavy too." Charlotte loses something of her gaiety. "Your skin is quite hot: and, dear child, you have a pulse like lightning." Charlotte looks grave. "Are you ill, my dear?" Nature for a moment prevails, and Charlotte answers, "No." "Indeed you are, my dear; is your stomach ill?" Still truth maintains her empire, and Charlotte still answers, "No." "Indeed, my dear, something's the matter with you; what is it?" Charlotte now in a subdued moaning voice, answers, "Nothing." "Poor dear, she speaks as if she were sick; here, put your head upon mamma's bosom; is it your head that aches?" Look at Charlotte now; her features are relaxed; her head lies languidly on mamma's breast; her mouth falls; distress is painted upon every feature; and in a voice scarcely audible, she replies, "No." "Bless me! but you are very sick; you can hardly speak! tell me, my dear, what it is you feel." Charlotte thinks of caudles

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and confections, nursings, soothings, and indulgencies, and answers half weeping: "I feel something; I don't "know what." "Sweet lamb, I knew "she was ill." Charlotte bursts into tears, and tells mamma she feels very sick. The bell is rung; the bed prepared; all the house put in commotion, and Miss Charlotte tottering on mamma's arm or carried by papa, is conveyed to bed, and then begins the usual mummery. This is the progress, nine times out of ten, of infantile diseases. They are absolutely tortured into illness.

"The other topic to which I have alluded is the necessity of CONSISTENCY in your behaviour towards children. I do not know, in the circle of moral action, a quality so requisite as this. It is advantageous to yourself, lest, like Penelope, you unravel the web you have woven; it is advantageous to your offspring, that he may never feel any thing like contempt or indifference towards you,

which he will do, if he be accustomed to find you at variance with yourself. Preserve that steady uniformity of conduct, which leaves no room for doubt or uncertainty: let there be as fixed a consonance between your will and your deed, as between the electric flash and the bolt that follows. Without this you may complain in vain of difficulty; in vain you will say that your admonitions are neglected, your threatenings despised; you have yourself taught your offspring to look upon you as an indecisive, inconsistent being, who talks of what he never performs, or does to-day, what in a similar case he did not do yesterday, and probably will not do to-morrow. The conviction of this weighing upon the minds of children, it is impossible they can look up to you as that example, that model which every parent ought to be to his offspring.

"One part of this consistency which I here speak of, and perhaps the most important

portant part, is, that your will should be sacred, and your commands obeyed with alacrity and without a murmur. I have indeed seen most afflicting instances of tergiversation in this respect. I have seen children punished at one time for a neglect, which, at another, has been tacitly sanctioned by the quiescent toleration of the parent: I have seen conduct censured to day, in the strongest terms of displeasure and disapprobation, which, to-morrow, has been received with complacency and smiles. In fact, I have never seen a parent preserve a necessary consistency in this particular. To me it appears a species of wanton barbarity, to inflict pain and disgrace in so capricious a manner; to beguile one day with sunshine and serenity, and to overtake the next with storm and ruin. In such a system of prevarication what can a child do? He sees approbation and censure succeed each other like cloud and sunshine in an April sky; his heart naturally cleaves

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to the soft and alluring; he confides in the bland countenance of to-day, and ventures to-morrow upon the same path, where he has already found smiles and applause; when, like a gloomy savage, the relentless monster rushes from his haunt, and, with a wanton and ferocious cruelty, inflicts his stripes for the very same cause which before dressed his face in smiles. Nothing can exceed such unfeeling insincerity! No: let your word be to your child as a wall of brass, impregnable to all assaults; what you have once asserted or commanded, let no intreaties, no tears, no prayers move you to retract; it is thus only that you can do justice to your offspring and yourself. If a child once succeed in making you go from your word, or alter your opinion, farewell to all future obedience from that child! He will always cherish the idea, that by imploring he can induce you to retract; this idea will make him careless as to what

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you say, and in time generate even a contempt for your will. But remember, if you lift your hand in wrath against that child, you violate the rights of justice and humanity: for the disobedience you would chastise, you have fostered by your own inconsistency. I would solemnly implore you therefore, and every one, whether parent, guardian, or preceptor, to abstain from such an insult upon the feelings of human nature. Guard the purity of your own hearts; let not those whom you are appointed, by God or man, to guide, suffer the pains of thy errors; rather let them read the ingenuous blush of self-conviction on thy cheek, than smart beneath the inflicted punishments of such a hateful tyranny! Maintain a rigorous consistency on your part, and the better to do this, beware how you indulge the goads of caprice; adopt no arbitrary, no trifling, no absurd resolution; though, if from the infirmity of human nature,

error

error should allure you to her path, rather take the intended step, and remedy it silently afterwards, than suffer yourself to be turned aside by importunity. It would be of comparatively less injury to your offspring, than the uncertainty which would arise from alternate advancing and receding, from reciprocal vigour and langour. It is not that you are to persist in error, when you know it to be such; you may correct its evil tendency in a thousand ways, without weakening the confidence and obedience of your child. It has been justly said, that it were better laws should be arbitrary and known, than mild and lenient, and unknown; this will apply precisely to the sort of mutual sincerity and moral certainty, which ought to subsist between the parent and his child.

"If I have not already exhausted your patience, I am sure I should do it were I to discuss the numerous topics that crowd

crowd upon my mind, and seem to demand attention: but I relinquish them voluntarily. Indeed, the question itself is so strongly interesting to me, and one upon which I have so frequently and so long thought, that, were I to consider it under every point of view which suggests itself, I should be, myself, weary. For the present, however, I relinquish the further consideration of the moral education of man, with once more pressing it upon your mind, that in society, this *is* and *must be* the most important of the three; that it should commence at a very early period; that it should be conducted in a precise, manly, energetic, and independent manner; that it should tend to form men rather than machines, and that it should be pursued with a steady and unbending consistency.

"The intellectual education of man, (which forms the third division of my subject) cannot admit of any thing but vague and general remark. At the first

glance, it is evident that it must be conducted upon principles of expediency, and that a constant reference must be had to the future destination of the pupil. I would not have this commence too early; the sedentary pursuits of mind agree but ill with the active vigour, and elastic nerve of youth. Yet, something may be done from very early infancy. The fundamental parts may be attended to, and may be laid in a desultory manner; during this period too, whatever requires merely the operation of memory should be followed; for it is a lamentable sacrifice of time, to waste the years of dawning intellect, when its appetite becomes voracious for food in the sterile and repulsive task of conning by rote. On this part of education, I cannot sufficiently condemn the ideas of Rousseau, who would make the constant stimulus to exertion, the worst of all our passions, self-interest. 'Discard this totally; discard also all compulsion. Endeavour to imbue

imbue the mind of your child with an ardent love of learning, and lead him forward in its path by strewing its brightest roses before him. Let him not be driven as a slave, but let him advance with the firm step and erect mien of conscious reason. Let him proceed towards the distant temple, from the native and perennial influence of awakened desire, then there is no fear of a relapse; there is no fear that he will halt in his progress, or turn aside at intervening obstacles. Inspirit him with that strong feeling of preference, and elective choice, which will preserve the energies of his mind from becoming stagnant; which will keep them in constant play, and fit for every emergency. I believe that in nine cases out of ten, children become stupid and inert, not from any inherent infirmity of mind, but because the road of information has been pointed out to them, either in a blundering way, or rendered irksome and disgusting by unskilful treatment.

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There is, in every human mind, a strong principle of curiosity, and a desire of perfection; but this principle is morally delicate in proportion to its strength: it may be destroyed by an unskilful process. On the contrary, if fostered with care, and directed with prudence, it becomes a spring of action which may be applied to the most noble and most extensive views. This native curiosity was admirably cherished by the mother of Sir William Jones; it was her constant method, whenever her son applied to her for information, to reply, "read, and you will know;" and Sir William declared that he owed to this, more than to any other cause, that ardour for knowledge which attended him through life, and which made him so illustrious an ornament to his country:

"I do not believe that it is exactly possible, at a very early age, to discover any decided indication of what the future character of a child, in respect to mind, will

will be: in fact, we may mould this creative part of man into whatever shape we please; for I am not yet so deeply initiated in modern philosophy, as to suppose, that any man is born an advocate or a general, a senator or a lord chancellor. After the character is, to a certain degree, formed, it then becomes possible to discover what career of life will best coalesce with it; but remember, the forming of that character rests almost wholly with you. Indeed, a child whom it is intended to educate for any of the liberal professions may follow one general outline in his early years; the groundwork of all is the same; the physician and the lawyer, the senator and the scholar, equally require the same foundation of classical knowledge, and the same cultivated intellect. Upon this broad basis you may afterwards rise any congenerous superstructure you please; but never forget that you should have a constant eye to the after-life of your pupil, and let

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there be that nice adaptation of parts, without which he never can perform his character in society with honor to himself, or with advantage to his fellow creatures.

"I have thus, my dear brother, endeavoured, in some measure, to acquit myself of the task you have assigned me, but whether in such a way as will please I know not. I have omitted many things, for the sake of brevity, upon which I could have enlarged; and I have confined myself to those particular topics which arise in the business of every day, and present themselves hourly to our sight. I have dipped my pencil in the living tints of nature, and in my delineations I am faithfully correct; but in the remedies which I have proposed, in the regulations which I have suggested, in the conduct which I have recommended, I have drawn from my own judgment, unbiassed by authority, unfettered, I hope, by prejudice, and uninfluenced, I know, by precedent. These, I am well aware, are often heterodox

heterodox and often apparently paradoxical; should they appear so to you, fear not that I will censure the soundness of your faculties; I will willingly hope that you may be right, and I will not call upon you to relinquish your opinion. I expect the same toleration from you. The time may come, perhaps, (I speak of mere possibility) when these very opinions may appear to *me* unfounded, fanciful, and even absurd; it *may* be so; and should it be so, I would be the very first to recant them, and to make that recantation as effectual as the principles themselves may have been; but until this happen, no man can expect me to relinquish them upon the mere authority of another; no man can expect, that with my reason unconvinced, I should abdicate my own opinions because they run counter to those of another. What I have said has come pure and unadulterated from my heart and mind; if the stream be foul,

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cleanse the source; I would be among the most active in such a work. These are the only grounds upon which any man ought to resign his opinion. I will never advance any thing which has not the sanction of my most deliberate judgment at the moment; and when advanced, I will never apostatize, till a judgment as deliberate, and as cogent, lends its sanction likewise."

There was a solemn pause after my father had ceased to speak. The impressive energy with which he uttered the last words; the dignity that seemed to animate him as he avowed the integrity of his principles, and the manly firmness with which he would maintain them while they appeared to him such as he then thought them, conspired to produce an effect that I had never witnessed before. His brother had listened with fixed attention, rarely interrupting him; and Sophia often cast a conscious look of self

reproach

reproach towards me when my father spoke of any consequences of erroneous education, which she thought might be discerned in herself. For myself, though I had often heard the principal arguments before, and though I had been accustomed to see them acted upon, from my infancy, yet I was sensibly affected by the regular discourse which I had heard, and which seemed to place before my mind, at one view, the whole of what it had contemplated at different intervals through a series of years. I hope I did not listen fruitlessly, and that the lessons of wisdom which I then heard, sunk deeply in my heart, and will ever be present to my thoughts when the occasions of my life may call for their influence. After a considerable silence, Sir James observed, that he had never before been led to consider several parts of education in the light that he now did: he rejoiced that his family were yet young enough to reap

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the benefit of his own enlarged ideas, and he trusted that when next his brother saw them, he would find their practice in such conformity to his own precepts as would give him pleasure.

CHAPTER V.

When I look back upon the period that I am now describing, and view the concatenation of events that occurred, I am almost tempted to believe that my father's mind was hallowed by one of those mysterious visions which, it is thought, God sometimes permits to man as he approximates to the goal that terminates his earthly career. But why am I called upon to recount what revives the grief that has slumbered, and renews the pangs that had decayed? Oh! ye who have known what it is to lose a parent who was endeared to you by every tie of nature, reason, and affection, pity me.

It was but two days after the conversation which I have just narrated, that my father was seized, suddenly, while sitting at breakfast, with a diliquium which alarmed us with the belief that he was then

dead.

dead. Terror was upon me, and in the moment of greatest need I was unable to act. My uncle did what I could not. He dispatched a servant for medical assistance, and he had my father removed from the ground, on which he had fallen, to a couch. He was breathless. I stood and gazed upon him with an unmoved look. Tears were denied me. They would have been a blessing, but I could shed none. One only thought possessed my mind. The servants came in and out; Sophia, my uncle, addressed me. I had no power of speech or of observation. My father lay motionless before me with clenched hands and distorted countenance. The blood issued from his nostrils: I stanched it with my handkerchief, and kissed the lips that were clammy with perspiration. I held that dear hand in mine that had always been extended to me with a smile of love when we met in the morning, and when we parted at night. It was now insensible.

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A physician arrived, and by the application of stimulants he restored my father to sense and motion. When I saw this, I was at once relieved; I threw myself upon my knees by his side, and wept a flood of tears. He was not dead; and hope rekindled her torch, soon to be extinguished for ever.

My father was ordered to be conveyed to bed, and there to be kept undisturbed. It was done, and it became my office to watch his slumbers and to minister to his wants. I was jealous of my prerogative and insisted that no other hand might tend him. In me it was a duty and a pleasure; in others it could only be an office; and I knew how much it would add to my father's comfort (as far as human assiduity can add comfort to the bed of sickness) to have me constantly about him.

I feared to enquire, because I feared to know, the nature of his complaint. I preferred that vague and uncertain hope which

which could be extracted from ignorance, to the perils that might wait upon knowledge. I easily believed in what I wished. I found a thousand sources of consolation. I found them in his age, in the temperance of his life, in the utility and virtue of his character. I strove to hide from myself the frail tenure of human existence. I wished to forget the truth of the poet, "Death's shafts fly thick," and to believe, that some immunity was granted to the being on whose existence the happiness and welfare of many rested. How sweet are the illusions that minister peace to a troubled mind. I would not rob a poor mourner of his comfort, though it were built upon the vainest expectation that ever mocked man's desires: while it lasts, it has all the relish of substantial bliss, and too certain it is that its duration will not be long. God, in the fullness of his mercy, has given to the human mind that power of self-deception, by which, in the dread of

of calamity, we are enabled to hide from ourselves its most painful features and to dwell only upon what breathes hope to the soul that sickens with fear. I experienced this mercy largely.

Several days had elapsed, and I perceived nothing to alarm me. I observed, indeed, a progressive decay of bodily power, but I attributed that to the confinement of a chamber, and trusted that he would regain his lost vigour, when he regained health sufficient to enable him to breathe the pure air of heaven.

On the morning of 6th of October, 1807, I was roused from my bed by Sophia, who told me that my father wished to see me. I received the summons without alarm, for I had left him, on the preceding night, so evidently improved, that I anticipated nothing which was unfavourable. I hastened to his room, however, and found that my uncle was already there, and one of the domestics. Some alarm now possessed me, and I hastily

hastily drew the bed curtain aside. My father was lying on his back, with his hands clasped, and his eyes directed towards heaven. He seemed to me to be dying. When he saw me at the foot of the bed he smiled with a most sweet affection, and held out his hand towards me. This unexpected act revived and cheered me. I seized the proffered hand and covered it with kisses. I enquired what change had taken place; and when he attempted to speak, I perceived that his voice was sensibly altered. He told me that he had fallen into a pleasant slumber after I had quitted him the preceding night, but that he awoke from it under such feelings of body as alarmed him: "alarmed me," said he, with solemnity, "lest I should be called away ere I had acquitted myself of my last duties in this world. I immediately rang the bell, as I wished to have you, and my brother, and my niece about me."

This was the first time he had ever intimated

timated to me a suspicion that his death was likely to happen, and the thought of it overwhelmed me with anguish. I strove to conceal it, however, that I might not fill his mind with anxiety. I expressed a fervent hope that the change might, perhaps, be beneficial in its consequences. My father made no reply but by a smile that expressed his doubt of what I said.

The physician had been sent for, and he arrived soon after. I did not dare to ask his opinion, but waited, with trembling anxiety, the issue of events. In the course of the forenoon he expressed a wish to receive the sacrament; and after that solemn ceremony had been performed, a holy and placid resignation seemed to possess him.

Delusion would now no longer aid me. I was compelled to admit the probability of what I dreaded, and my mind dwelt with agony upon the anticipation. I had an arduous task to sustain. My

heart was bursting with grief, yet I laboured to conceal that grief, lest I should distress the last moments of a parent; lest I should add bitterness to the last struggles of expiring nature. How I acquitted myself I scarcely recollect.

Towards evening he beckoned me to his bed side, and when I sat down he thus addressed me:

"It would ill become me, my child, to conceal from you, at a moment like this, an event which I feel must take place. It is the will of God that I should be taken from you. To his dispensations let us submit with holy confidence. He has granted to me a length of years that has been sufficient to see you arrived at that age which cannot be called helpless; and I hope he has so far blest my endeavours, that your mind is furnished with principles which will secure you from the paths of error. He hath graciously permitted me to leave you in circumstances of temporal welfare, which will secure

you

you from the temptations of poverty, and enable you to dispense blessings to those who may need your aid. These are mercies which we ought to feel, and feeling, to acknowledge with humble gratitude. Where much is given, let us not repine that something is denied.

"To your uncle I have committed you for protection, till you shall obtain (if you ever obtain) that better protection which a prudent marriage will bestow. But in that *one* step, in that step which involves so vast a portion of human happiness, let me exhort you to proceed with deliberation. Of the utmost possible misery, and of the utmost possible happiness, marriage is equally the source. It distributes neither unmixed, but the proportions rest with ourselves. I would not have you expect unearthly bliss in an earthly connection. Prepare yourself for that fluctuation of comfort which must be expected to arise, when its source is not wholly within yourself. Do not let

desire, caprice, or habit, govern you in a procedure, which, once ended, can rarely be remedied. Neither decide upon the mere dictates of the reason, without any participation of the heart. It is a union which should rest upon the former, but *must be* embellished by the latter.

"If," continued he, "nature would permit me, I could wish to say much upon this subject. I did not look to be so early called away, and therefore I had neglected to fortify your mind upon so essential a point. But, *in the midst of life we are in death:* who shall rejoice in the vigour of his days, and say to himself, thus will I do to-morrow? Who shall build his hopes of this world, even upon the firmest foundations of the world? Oh, my child, let not my departure be without instruction to you. When I awoke on that morning, in which it pleased God to lay the hand of death heavily upon me, I arose, flushed with

with high hopes, and full with futurity. Many were the things that I promised to myself to perform; many were the delights that I anticipated; and many were the schemes that I projected. Where are they now? They are passed and gone, as the shadow of man that departeth with the evening sun. Let the solemn lesson sink deep into your heart; and, in the gayest and most assured certainty of your days, remember, that the invisible arm of death may be raised to strike you to the dust."

I could no longer contain my tears; they burst forth with audible expressions of my sorrow, and I threw myself, in an agony of grief, upon the bed by my father. I embraced him, and wept most bitterly. I covered his parched lips with kisses, and could scarcely refrain from impious murmurs at the decree of Providence. In a short while my agitation subsided, and I looked towards my father. He was calm and collected. No perturbation

bation was visible in his countenance. The cares of this world were incapable of reaching him. He gently chid me, and strove to fill my mind with topics of consolation. I listened with reverence: alas! I could not obey. He resumed the former conversation.

"The happiness of marriage, has not," said he, "a more determined foe than suspicion. And, indeed, by suspicion we cause the evils which we dread. Suspicion produces coldness, hatred, and almost every malignant passion. But it can never find entrance into the bosom that is filled with love towards its object. I remember, when I was first married to your mother, I became acquainted with Sir Edward Carleton, whose wife was the most accomplished and most interesting female I ever saw. At the period of my acquaintance she was the mother of four children. I became much attached to her, as you have often heard me say: but in no manner unworthy of a man, a christian,

or

or a husband. Your mother knew me, loved me, and trusted me: and a connection, that would have embittered the life of almost any other persons, proved to us a source of unmixed felicity. Lady Carleton became her dearest friend, and her husband became mine; we resided under the same roof, and passed our days in peaceful retirement and mutual kindness. My comfort was disturbed only by one circumstance; and that was the opportunity which was thus presented to the depraved and idle part of mankind, to insinuate the criminality of my connection with Lady Carleton. It did not indeed, disturb me much; for I had always learned to rest satisfied with conscious innocence. I had a friend too, who used a friend's freedom, and remonstrated with me upon the subject, in a letter, which I have preserved, as well as the reply which I wrote to it."

Here he paused for a moment; and then directed me to a particular drawer in

his

his bureau: where, he said, I should find a packet, which he desired me to bring him. I did so, and when he had slightly examined it, he put it into my hands.

"I find," said he "that I have incorporated my friend's letter with my own. The name of that friend was Hamilton. Our acquaintance began at college: and when he was seven and twenty he obtained a situation in India, where he fell a victim to the climate. I loved him very tenderly, for he had an excellent heart, and a very superior mind. He differed much from me, at that time. He had less enthusiasm of character. In looking over that paper in your hand, I perceive some things which I should not now so strongly insist upon: not because I think them wrong, but because they are too violently opposed to the established opinions of society. I have learned, from experience, that if we would be happy, we must submit to opinion, even though, as Sir Thomas Browne has observed, it "rides

"rides upon the neck of reason." You may read that paper hereafter, and consider it as the legacy of a departed father. It contains much of what I consider as essential to happiness in the marriage state; and where youthful ardour, and strong feelings, may have propelled me into extravagance, you will know how to appreciate it. Upon many of the maxims, there laid down, I acted; and man never yet enjoyed higher or more permanent felicity than I enjoyed, in my union with your dear mother: a union about to re-commence, never, never more to be dissolved."

My uncle and Sophia now entered the room; and while the latter affectionately strove to console me, her father was engaged in conversation with his brother respecting some arrangements of his temporal concerns as connected with myself. It was a solemn, a heart-rending scene; and Sir James was deeply afflicted. When this last trial of my father's resignation

was

was passed, he signified a wish to sleep, and they quitted the chamber. I remained; for, no persuasion or entreaty could remove me from the post I had assigned myself. My father continued to sleep till towards midnight.

How tranquil was his slumber! Pain and sorrow were then vanquished, and what was mortal in him, obtained short respite. Oh sleep! most merciful, when you descend upon the eye-lids of the suffering!

What a solemn awe steals over the mind when surrounded by sickness, night, and silence! Thought, driven inwards, searches deeply into our hearts, and unfolds a thousand hopes and fears which dwell, unnoticed, while the world's passing scenes, its noise, its gaiety, and tumult, court the sight. When we abstract ourselves from our fellow-creatures; when we estimate our passions and their aims; when we think on all the disappointments of the past, and all the

hopes

hopes of the future; when we recollect, (and in such moments who can escape the recollection?) the obscure depravities of our nature, the unacted vice that festers in our bosoms, the unseen corruptions of thought, and the secret deeds of guilt that have escaped the world's eye, what terror, and sorrow, and humiliation possess us. The applause on which we have fed with such grateful luxury; the opinion which we have bought with such seeming virtue; the excellence that has been gratuitously assigned us, lose all their charms, and in the silence of meditation stand before us, as accusers; for, *we know* how much we deserve, and how much has been given to us from error. But the mortification that we endure will be useful, if it impel us to the acquisition of higher virtue, which may justify, to *ourselves*, the reputation we enjoy.

These were the thoughts that occupied my mind as I sat and watched his slumbers, and inwardly prayed to heaven to

spare

spare his days. Vain, perhaps, impious prayer. Why should we cherish the presumptuous hope, that a perfectly just and wise Being will do that from entreaty which would not be done without?

When my father awoke, he found his brother sitting by his side, to whom he expressed a grateful sense of God's mercy in permitting him to depart from this world with all his faculties perfect, and undisturbed by much bodily pain. He said he felt much relieved by the sleep he had enjoyed; "yet," added he, looking earnestly at my uncle, and placing his hand upon his heart, "I feel here a sensation that tells me my trial will soon be over."

Sir James expressed a hope that he might be wrong, and that heaven would yet spare him to the world and to his

"I scarcely wish it," replied my father, with a tremulous, subdued voice, which told how the feelings of the man

and

and the parent were struggling with the resignation and the piety of the christian. "I have communicated to you all that I wished respecting my affairs and my beloved child, and I am devoutly thankful to Providence that he has permitted you to be with me at this time. It relieves my mind from much anxiety. Death has no terrors for me now." He paused for a moment, and then added, with fervour, "Were I, my brother, to tell you all my thoughts, upon this so dreaded subject, you would think me an enthusiast. Alas! and who would not wish for that enthusiasm which enables us to look with smiles upon an event so calculated to excite our strongest terrors? The peace of virtue and the peace of enthusiasm, differ only in degree. The good man, without fervour of character, trembles, lest the measure of his piety be found wanting; and the calm that should spring from innocence is troubled

and obscured by the clouds of weakness and apprehension. It requires, indeed, some fortitude of mind to enable a man to remain self-satisfied: but a fearful christian is a melancholy object. Though the Deity be a just, yet he is a merciful judge; and justice, tempered by mercy, half smiles upon the errors of mankind. Surely, from that breast which is conscious of no deliberate act of wickedness, of no enormous villainy, of no continued course of iniquity, fear ought to be banished; he who has lived such a life in this world, as permits no man to lift the finger of reproach or accusation against him, may hope for the blessings of eternity, even though his goodness have not been perpetual, nor his aberrations few. This is a consciousness so closely inwoven with every feeling of my heart, that it would cheer me in the bitterest agonies of mortal dissolution, and make me long to throw off this fleshy investment which hides,

hides, from my view, glories unknown, glories, beyond the reach of man's mightiest comprehension."

Again he paused: an unwonted fire animated his eyes: a glow of inspiration dwelt upon his countenance: and with upcast looks he exclaimed—

"Heavens! what a moment must that be, when the last flutter expires upon our lips! What a change! Tell me, ye sages, tell me, ye divines, ye who are deepest read in nature and in God, into what new worlds are we born? What new being do we receive? Whither has that spark, that unseen, that uncomprehended intelligence, fled? Look upon the cold, livid, ghastly carcase, that lies before you! That was but a shell, a gross and earthly covering, which held, for awhile, the immortal essence that has now left it. Left it, to range, perhaps, through illimitable space, to receive new capacities of delight, new powers of perception, new glories of beatitude. Ten thousand

fancies

fancies rush upon my mind as it now contemplates the awful moment between life and death. It is a moment big with imagination's greatest hopes and fears: it is the consummation that clears up all mystery, resolves all doubt, which removes contradiction and destroys error. Great God! what a flood of rapture, may, at once, burst upon the departed soul! The unclouded brightness of the celestial regions, the pure existence of ethereal beings, the solemn secrets of nature, may be divulged: the immediate unity of the past, the present, and the future: strains of unimaginable harmony, forms of imperishable beauty, may suddenly burst upon the delighted senses, and bathe them in measureless delight. The mind is lost in a wilderness of gladness as she contemplates it, and dares not turn from the heavenly vision to one so gloomy, so tremendous as the departure of the wicked. Human fancy shrinks back appalled, and hope and charity whisper to the bleeding heart

heart, that THERE, where all mercy is, there will be forgiveness."

These were the last words he spoke. After he had uttered them, he sunk back, exhausted with the effort he had made, and remained breathing gently, till at last, nature hastening to a close, he expired, without a struggle, in my arms.

CHAP. VI.

I WILL not dwell upon the painful recollection of all that happened after my father's death, nor attempt to describe the grief that possessed me for the loss of such a parent. His obsequies were performed with that decent respect to his memory which satisfied the wishes of those that survived him, without neglecting his peculiar desire that no ostentation or vain parade should accompany his body to its interment. He had always spoken with displeasure of funereal pomp, as calculated rather to gratify the pride of the living than to honour the memory of the dead: and he further disapproved of it, as diminishing that solemn awe which ought to be felt by every one who assists at, or who beholds the solemnization of the rites that are paid to shrouded mortality.

His

His death caused an unusual sensation in the neighbourhood. As he lived beloved, so he died lamented. In him his equals had lost the friend, the companion, and the gentleman: while the poor bewailed the loss of their guardian, their benefactor, and their master. It was a mournful, and yet a pleasing spectacle, to behold the groupé of young and old, male and female, that was assembled in the church-yard, to pay the testimony of their tears to the virtues of the deceased. *They* had lost what accident might again supply: but *I* had lost a FATHER.

I had often been led to admire, but never till now, did I feel so forcibly, the solemn grandeur of our burial service; it is a beautiful and affecting composition: it is sublime and pathetic: full of dignity, full of solemn ideas. No person can hear it read, either in the church or over the grave, without feeling his heart most powerfully moved; no person can attend the ceremonies of inhumation,

with all their gloomy pomp before him, and not turn a pensive thought towards his own mortality, and the narrow bed that awaits him.

I am fond of these ceremonies. The melancholy tolling of a bell would draw me aside sooner than all the gay trillings of music. I love to follow a funeral, and pause at every step, and lay each accent that it speaks close upon my heart. I love to hold some mouldering bone within my hand, and knit it with its brethren, and dress them up, in fancy, with mortal, perishable beauty; to invest the loathsome ruin with grace and charms; to give it dignity and excellence, and love.

I have stood, I know not how often, lost in these imaginations, till I have given such earthly lustre to this, my fancy moulded form, that I have sighed to press it to my heart, and breathe into it a kindred life. But then, I have thought on what I held; and I have lifted

up

up my eyes and looked upon the beings that surrounded me, gifted with life and sense and motion, and turned them again upon the heaped dust that lay scattered at my feet, thick with intermingled bones, and a cold shudder has crept across me. Even such, methought, are they!

Can it be that these creatures whom we behold so lovely, moving round us, are compounded of such vile materials? Are they really thus charming? or is it we are cheated by a purblind sight which Providence has kindly given us? Oh! think, that the fairest form which nature ever wove, or fancy garnished in her gayest mood; that the eye which beams with heaven fraught fire, the cheek that glows with vermil lustre, the shape that glides in easy majesty along, the voice whose music tones dwell sweetly on the ear, think that these will moulder into dust, will become part of that earth we tread upon, will look horrible in the eye, will offend, by nauseous stench, the sense of

of smell. These thoughts have come across my mind at such moments, and I have mourned the glaring vanity of man, who builds his castle of delight on such foundations; who struts along, poorly proud of a frail tenement, whose glittering surface shines but on a summers day, and will shew a mournful sight in sickness, age, and death! The mouldering earth has dropped from my unconscious hands, and I have followed the slowly moving crowd to where the new made grave yawns for its food. There an awful silence prevails; the minister performs the last, solemn rites; the earth sounds hollow on the coffin, as he pronounces the words "ashes to ashes," and "dust to dust;" the mourners gather round to view, once more, the dull abode of their departed friend or relative: perhaps a mother looks on with streaming eyes; perhaps a husband sees there the earthly close of all that filled his heart with rapture, or rendered life a boon worth

worth keeping; perhaps, a lover weeps over a beloved mistress, her blossom withered ere the flower was blown. Oh! with what feelings must they behold the cold and reckless wretch throw in the human earth which seems, for ever, to shut out hope and comfort from their hearts!

All these mingled sensations occupy my mind whenever I behold this spectacle: what then must have been their degree when doomed to witness it as an orphan; when doomed to see a father's loved remains given to the silent sepulchre, never more to be beheld by me, till we shall meet again in union everlasting, in God's eternal mansion? Let me escape the recollection, for even yet it fills me with anguish.

CHAP. VII.

It was the earliest solace I received, after my father's death, to read the paper which he had put into my hands in his last moments. I found it, such as he had described it, a letter from himself to his friend, partly in vindication, and partly supporting the dignity and efficacy of human virtue when it really exists in the heart. Perhaps, had he read it through at the time he entrusted it to me, he would have felt that in some of his positions he assumes, as a principle, a greater moral purity than is usually to be found in mankind, and consequently, that the liberty which might be innoxiously enjoyed by one, would prove a bane in the hands of another. My father, drawing all his maxims from his own bosom, reasoned, I fear, without an adequate recollection of man in general.

Yet

Yet the picture which he delineates is surely a sublime one: and though it were wholly unattainable by us, it merits to be regarded as a model to which all should strive to assimilate themselves. These considerations have induced me to transcribe his letter into this volume, without any other comment than what has been already given: its history I have detailed, and its arguments therefore, can be duly appreciated *ad hominem*. What else it may contain, will be approved or condemned, as all moral notions are, according to the peculiar opinions of those who read.

LETTER.

"I CANNOT help recurring to the subject of your last letter, and in proportion as I view it calmly I am additionally convinced that the principles it contains are false. When I first read it I was moved to anger, and the reply I wrote bore evident

evident marks of the emotion it excited. It appeared to me full of the frigid declamation of a cold, calculating heart; it breathed the very language of apathy, and as if meant as a contrast to the tumultuous state of my own mind, it seemed to be the calm effusions of the most perfect indifference; a sort of temperate serenity pervaded every line of it. I knew that your natural character was not composed of such quiescent materials, and I had repeatedly experienced the kindling ardour with which your bosom caught the feelings that agitated my own. I was utterly unable to conceive what motive could induce you to display such a vexing stoicism on the present occasion. If you have ever known what it is to have your heart bursting with emotion; to turn with eagerness to some friend or relative where you may discharge the oppressive burden, and, when the excited feelings are ranging through your bosom, with warmth, with energy, with resistless

force

force, to be repulsed by a cold averted mien, or answered with some commonplace, senseless observation; if you have ever known what it is to endure the glow of passion, the mingled indignation, rage, contempt that fill your soul at that moment, you may then conceive what my feelings were when I read your letter. I wished to believe it deception. I tried to discover some hidden purpose of merriment. I longed to detect some concealed irony that might relieve me from the torturing belief that it was serious. But it was in vain. I read it, and I re-read it; I was compelled, spite of my most ardent wishes, to admit the unwelcome truth, and the reply I wrote was only a very subdued transcript of the sensations that tore my mind. Since, I have become more calm; and though I have had no explanation from you, I have enabled myself to consider it with the coolness of dispassionate reason. To the utmost of my power I have com-

manded to silence the passions that possessed my bosom, and I have meditated upon the ideas contained in your letter with all the equity, with all the equanimity of an impartial judge; and having done so, I cannot, indeed I ought not, to abstain from communicating the results that have taken place with regard to myself.

I will quote your own words, that the imperfection of memory may leave no room for cavilling or misconception.

"I wish I could participate, my dear "friend," you say, "in the happiness you "have so glowingly depicted. It has not, "indeed, often happened that any joys "known by you have been such as could "find no responsive chord in my own "heart; why it is so at present admits, "perhaps of an easy solution. I am "less accustomed blindly to resign my-"self to the impulse of my feelings; I "consider them as subordinate to my "judgment, and I always wish the "sanction

" sanction of my reason to attend their
" movements. I am not, as you know,
" incapable of experiencing the warmest
" emotions; but, in order that they may
" be permanent, I look to their pro-
" priety. I am well aware there is a dis-
" sonance in one part of our character,
" though the pleasing unison of all the
" other parts has hitherto produced such
" a general harmony, that this single dis-
" cord has never become predominant.
" You are more impassioned than myself.
" Hurried away, in every instance, by the
" impetuosity of your feelings, you have
" frequently had occasion to repent that
" you neglect to deliberate before you
" act. What seems eligible to you for
" the present moment is enough; you
" never push your enquiries beyond it.
" A restlessness of disposition too, the
" necessary consequence of this impetu-
" osity of feeling, impels you constantly
" to seek variety: to escape from the mo-
" notony of perpetually recurring events.

" This

"This forms a conspicuous part of your
"character; and I confess, in my esti-
"mation, it is not an enviable part; it
"may produce, as certainly it does, oc-
"casional interesting situations, to which
"the man of dull uniformity must be a
"stranger; it may also afford you op-
"portunities for action that serve to call
"forth sensations that would otherwise
"lie dormant; but it produces also such
"an incertitude of character, it creates
"such a perennial liability to error, it
"exposes you to such constant danger,
"resulting from perpetual novelty of situ-
"ation, that I could almost say the evils
"of such a temperament greatly exceed
"the advantages. Be that, however, as
"it may, I consider myself as diametri-
"cally opposite to you in this respect;
"but do not, my dear friend, imagine I
"state this discrepancy in order to vaunt
"its excellence: alas! I owe it more to
"accident and the early situation in
"which I was placed, than to principle
"or

" or any meritorious exertions of self-
" government: however, it enables me
" sometimes to be more truly your friend,
" than I could perhaps otherwise be, were
" I more conformably adapted to your-
" self; I become a sort of neutral power;
" a balance, to prevent the ascendancy of
" your inflammable particles; it makes
" me, as it were, your Mentor, by giving
" me the sedate gravity of years, without
" their morose petulance. You see
" how candidly I have assigned my own
" part. May no future difficulties render
" the assumption ominous!

" Have you duly appreciated your
" present situation? Are you aware of
" the probable consequences that may
" follow? Are you sensible of the in-
" evitable dangers attendant upon the
" further progress of the passion that
" seems already entirely to occupy you?
" I fear this is an enquiry you have to-
" tally omitted; if so, let me perform

"your duty, and shew you the path you
"are treading.

"She is a wife and a mother—what
"an absurdity! You are cherishing a
"passion that must be aimless or crimi-
"nal; the latter in your breast, it can
"never be; and the former is unworthy
"of a wise man. If you seek merely to
"pass a few vacant hours; if you wish
"only to amuse yourself by trifling with
"a sprightly, interesting woman, and to
"flatter your vanity by being thought
"worthy of her notice, I could forgive
"even such frivolous motives, for they
"are almost natural to man. I will go
"a step further. Admitting Julia to be
"that interesting, that amiable character
"you describe her, (and I know the vi-
"gour of your judgment too well to
"doubt the accuracy of your delineation)
"I can suppose it perfectly consistent
"that you should feel a solid and ho-
"nourable friendship for her. Virtue

" should always obtain our regard and re-
" spect; and, in a mind like yours, virtue
" and merit united to female attractions,
" would, I very well know, need no
" other advocate. But your letters to me
" bespeak neither of these allowable si-
" tuations. They are the impassioned
" offspring of an ardent affection; they
" breathe all the fire of newly-kindled
" love. Am I right? I fear so. Yes,
" my friend, I fear so; and this fear
" springs from the most tender regard
" to your happiness and honour. You
" see I am becoming serious. In your
" breast love must be an angel or a dæ-
" mon; it can know no medium; it can
" never be a tame, nerveless passion,
" built upon cool systematic calculations.
" Once admitted, it can be expelled only
" by some passion still more violent and
" less amiable. This would be the case
" where its object is perfectly legitimate,
" and its feelings flow in the most even
" channel. What must it be when equivo-
" cal in its origin, and more than equivo-

"cal in the propriety of its application?
"A thousand obstacles are preparing
"to thwart it; ten thousand situations
"will arise to agonize it; and it will be
"denied the sweet consolation of com-
"plaint, for where can you turn? Beware
"too the obtrusion of such thoughts,
"and such desires as may sully its
"boasted purity. The path of human
"affection is devious, and the con-
"fines of vice and virtue border so
"closely, that the most vigilant attention
"is sometimes betrayed. Upon this
"head, however, I confess I am little
"anxious, so well acquainted I am
"with the principles that sway you.

"But what return can you expect?
"Here seems to me all the difficulty and
"all the danger. Both situated the
"same, what have you to proffer, what
"have you to receive? Oh, my friend!
"madness itself could not err as you do.
"You are chasing a phantom whose glit-
"tering form may, for awhile, delight you;
"but, like Pygmalion, you will sigh ere
"long

' long to animate the airy shadow. Here
" is the gulph that awaits you. Could
" you remain stationary, it would be
" well; but that is not the nature of
" human passion; it advances to a cer-
" tain point with steady steps, and then
" recedes; the time of approximation is
" your danger; I foresee you will proceed
" to such a length that to go on will be
" agony, to return impossible. But, my
" friend, every step in this path is—
" what? I dare not say; use your rea-
" son and judge. Julia you say is amia-
" ble, nay more, in her manners. Are you
" the man upon whom such manners
" can operate coldly? She has heard the
" declaration of your affection. Can
" such a declaration come from your
" breast, and not convey with it a very
" large portion of a warm and feeling
" heart? and was there ever yet a man
" of strong and generous character, of
" a liberal and enthusiastic mind, who
" made that sacrifice upon the shrine of

 " beauty

" beauty and of virtue, who did not hope
" an equal return. Is not even the very
" circumstance of its being offered on the
" one side the strongest impulse to its
" being given on the other; and if so,
" what is it you are doing my friend?
" I know not how to speak with suf-
" ficient delicacy on the subject; how
" to find words that may communicate
" my ideas without pain to you. Were
" I to condemn the intercourse it would
" not be from bigotry, or from a weak
" attachment to established rules that
" have more of piety than of sense in them.
" But I shrink from countenancing it,
" because the probabilities of its felicity
" are so strongly against it; because in
" itself it is a connexion which, in the
" broad interpretations of society, may
" cover you both with vexation. In
" *your* breasts it may exist pure, but
" in the breasts of thousands it would be
" stained with crime; nor can I com-
" pletely satisfy myself, that under any
" shape

" shape it can be vindicated. Perhaps I
" am old-fashioned, but I confess that in
" my estimation, marriage ought to place
" a bar between the sexes which should
" not be o'erleaped; she who attempts
" to unite the characters of single and
" wedded life, attempts to confound the
" eternal propriety of things, and she
" will often perhaps look back upon the
" undertaking with unavailing sorrow. I
" could wish them to be for ever distinct
" as I am convinced domestic peace and
" virtue can flow from such unity
" alone; I would not impose harsh and
" cynical restrictions; I desire only to
" maintain the necessary divisions of so-
" ciety uninfringed. I can, indeed, ea-
" sily believe that the very singularity
" (as you view it) of this connection,
" its romantic nature would be an addi-
" tional motive to you for cherishing it.
" You are fond of paradoxes, and this is
" one. But how will you reconcile your

" ideas with the following sentiment of
" a churchman and a moralist?

' *All behaviour which is designed, or*
' *which knowingly tends to captivate the*
' *affection of a married woman, is a bar-*
' *barous intrusion upon the peace and virtue*
' *of a family, though it fall short of*
' *adultery.*' Remember, I do not myself
coincide with the unlimited assertion
contained in this sentence.

" But there is another danger, still
" different, and yet nearer, that strikes
" me. Julia is married. Are you ac-
" quainted with her husband? No.
" Do you know his temper, the libera-
" lity of his mind, his character? No.
" Are you prepared to encounter the
" construction which he may put upon
" an event of this kind occurring during
" his absence? and how would you re-
" concile it to your conscience, to your
" heart, should the jealousy of an ardent
" love be excited, and you behold your-
" self

"self the unintentional ravager of a do-
"mestic peace that bloomed so sweetly
"ere you intruded? If you behold mi-
"sery, discontent, sorrow, pining an-
"guish, and perhaps death, the conse-
"quence of these, flowing from a cause
"which originated with yourself; and
"Julia, whom now you prize so highly,
"the victim of corroding grief; would
"you not turn away, racked with cure-
"less agony, and seek relief, it may be,
"in an act of desperation? Yet all this
"may happen; it is within the probabi-
"lities of the most sober calculation.
"Oh, my friend! I see you standing on
"a verge, whose awful height is hidden
"from you by the thick mist of passion
"that surrounds you. I conjure, by the
"solemn bond of friendship and of love,
"to pause. Do not rashly dare a danger
"whose eternal consequences you can-
"not dream of. This is not visionary;
"I have experience and sense on my
"side."

Such

Such are your admonitions and such your fears: that they spring from the most unequivocal motives I well know, and for that their origin is worthy, I am the more inclined to treat them with respect, and to shew why I cannot teach my conduct obedience to them.

The reasons you assign, why, in the present instance, you cannot participate in the pleasure I have so glowingly depicted, I believe to be just. I have long been aware of that one discord in our characters; but, as you observe, the prevailing harmony has hitherto been so great, that its effect was lost. Often too have you told me how much I suffer myself to be carried away by the feelings of the moment, and sometimes have predicted most solemn and awe-inspiring consequences from it. I used to smile at you then, as I do now; for I was unwilling to believe that my reason could ever be so effectually blinded as to leave me at the mercy of these passions in

moments

moments of trial and of danger. The power to resist must remain with me while I have the power to act; and though unbridled passion may carry me with greater velocity, I feel that it will hardly drive me further than other men. The race horse and the pad both start for the same goal; the one flies, the other creeps, but neither o'erleaps the boundary. I wish not to be coldly correct; it is an emasculated virtue.

You insist, with alarming energy, upon our mutual situation; the stern complexion of your morality would intimidate an ordinary mind; it would intimidate even me, were I not prepared for it; had I not well considered and harmonized with my feelings those very objections which you urge with such force. Yes, she is married! Yes, she is a mother. What then? Does the human heart undergo a metamorphosis after the ritual ceremony of the church? Is the ring a magic circle, whose properties are po-

tent enough to confound all feeling, to hoodwink the mind, to corrupt the natural sentiments of the bosom? Is there, in the words wife and husband, some invisible spirit that pierces through our nature, and curdles the genial current of human affection? Is the wide extended love, the sweet play of the heart, the general delight we take in our species, the natural emotions of the soul, are all these to vanish before the magical incantations of the altar? Are we to turn away from the world, and the world's concerns; are we to crush the kindling warmth, to forego the most endearing intercourse of life, to tear from our hearts the sweet band of union that linked us to our kind, to choak up the living stream of rich delight that gives unfading verdure to the path of life; must we shrink back with fear and horror, and well disciplined disgust, from the mutual intercourse of the sexes, without which this world were but a barren desart, and its highest

highest pleasures only sullen cares? Must all this be done the moment two beings consent to strengthen the intimacy of a partial connexion? It is a vulgar and debasing idea, and it is degrading to the heart of man.

I know the import which the million attach to the word *marriage*. In the dictionary of the world it is an act which condemns the perpetrator to remedyless sorrow; which demands more horrid sacrifices than ever stained the sanguinary rites of savage deities; it is an act which calls upon us to renounce our dearest feelings, to cease to be human, to unfix the seated passions of our nature, and to supply their place by one sordid impulse, one groveling desire, one master principle. It is thus the world think; and hence the bitter curses of the enthralled; hence the miseries of this state; hence the infidelities; hence the exhortations of the moralist, the enquiries of the philosopher, the gibes and sarcasms of the

the satirist. Men have erected a false idol, and bowed to it; in the hearts of their children they have propagated the faith that has made themselves wretched; the goads and stings of resistless appetite urge the victim on; and where he seeks relief from one devouring anguish, he finds a gulph, a bottomless gulph of sorrow that he dreamed not of. Hemmed in by the world's opinion, which here indeed is bought with drops of blood, with agony that knows no balm, he bids his face assume deceitful smiles; and, taught a cunning task by sad necessity, he plays a guileful game, which ceases to be criminal, because it is universal: perhaps, indeed, a haughty mind, so trammelled, shakes off the unworthy load, and spurns a servitude which degrades him; and what is his reward? too often scorn, contempt, and infamy.

This is a picture at which my soul revolts. Oh my friend! I have had golden dreams here. I have sat and pictured

such

such delights—surely not beyond the grasp of human nature—and I have felt so keenly, the possibility of their existence, that my heart has swelled with impatience to possess them. Marriage has appeared to me a deity of enchanting loveliness; her eye effused the mildness of innocence, her tongue spoke the language of perfect harmony and peace; her breast treasured up the liberal virtues, and her thoughts were spotless as the bosom of a summer sky; her conduct was the visible language of her heart; her brow shewed no insulting taunt; the mean passions of our nature never dimmed the lustre of her countenance; her mind, generous as the hand of warm benevolence, disdained to harbour low suspicions, blushed to exact a servile devotion, abhorred the foulness of jealousy; in her bosom dwelt enshrined the precious pledge she had given at the altar; daily and hourly she turned to it, and reverenced its mandates; it was her pride

pride, her happiness, her joy. In that bosom dwelt too, a living source of human love, whence darted rays to various points, as warm, as glowing, as those that centre now in one beloved object; but they wanted that nameless energy which then informed them. Conscious of purity, she honoured the human heart too much to fix insidious doubts on all its movements; pleased to think nobly of the object she had selected for her especial love, she delighted only to see in it all that dignifies and elevates our nature: —oh, my friend, there is *my idol!* I call upon you, upon the world, to do homage: discard the painted image that has so long deluded you: see here a chaste and pure one: for myself I could kneel with unfeigned devotion before a deity so propitious to human happiness: I can do reverence to any thing that robs us of our vices, our prejudices, and our errors, and gives us peace and virtue in their stead.

But let me be more explicit. I am deeply interested in this question: it has occupied my thoughts since I have had the power of thought; and I am anxious to be clearly understood, because I have already suffered some odium from my strict adherence to my own opinions upon it.

It is a low and sordid idea, that marriage ought to place a bar between the intercourse of the sexes; I mean between that intercourse which exists within the boundaries of personal contamination. The wish of such a restriction must have arisen, first, in the mind of some degraded being, who drew his maxims of morality from the corrupted volume of his own breast. Besides, it is demanding an impossibility; it is enforcing the necessity of systematical deception: it is torturing the heart with a perpetual conflict between bigotted duty and unsophisticated nature. What! does the moral system sustain a complete revolution the moment

ment a priest has pronounced a few words; have we no longer eyes; are our senses obscured; do we cease to be human? If we are none of these, how then can we perform what implies the existence of all. Believe it not. Though thousands may discharge this bitter task, yet, would they speak the solemn language of truth, they would tell you that it has been a task of horror: tears would gush forth at the very recollection of what they had endured. Can it be otherwise while the selfish system is maintained which appropriates human nature like the beast of the field, and chains, with despotic force, the sympathies of the heart?

I own I am at a loss to conceive why this should be so. The duties of the married state are of a plain and simple nature: they demand no extraordinary energy of character to fulfil. They are sometimes enough to occupy the meanest of our faculties; while the higher are

left undirected. Is the sphere of human affection necessarily so contracted that it can embrace only one object? and will it be said, that a married person is incapacitated from discharging the duties of his station, if he suffer a new passion to possess his heart? It will be answered—yes: but they who answer thus, answer from the impulse of unworthy feelings.

Why is marriage a state so proverbially unhappy, that even children learn to jeer it? Because it is set in opposition to nature. Men have hemmed it in with thorns and briars; they have, to a certain degree, disunited it from the world: every step within the pale, is agony; every step beyond, is infamy. Suspicion, envy, jealousy, and all the rankling passions of little minds, rear their horrid crests in the van: behind, sorrow, tears, and anguish, walk an eternal round. Injustice too has laid her cruel hand upon it: man, as the lawgiver, has been lenient to himself; but he has been a sanguinary tyrant to the other sex: he claims

exemptions and immunities, which he denies to them: he disdains himself to wear the fetters he has forged for his companion.

Were I asked, what *possible* condition could produce the *greatest earthly happiness* to man, I should reply—MARRIAGE. There is not, there *cannot* be, a state superior to it in this world. But for me, it must be differently constituted to what it now is. Discard the restraints of a diseased mind; let every thing be open, candid, ingenuous: let Virtue, as she ought, stand by her own vigour, and shine by her own lustre: disdain to be a constant spy upon the actions of your fellow-creatures; scorn the baseness that imputes to untried worth, weakness and degeneracy. Let there be mutual honour, faith, and simplicity of character; concealment is a slow poison that works with certain malignity: a lie debases the heart, and unfits it for the culture of great and generous virtues.

Give

Give the widest possible sphere to human love and affection; let its objects be multiplied;—why not? If you forbid, you can only produce deception; you cannot root out the fixed habitudes of nature: you may, indeed, pride yourself upon the sordid success with which you fetter the bursting emotions of the heart; you may quaff the lowly, crouching, timid obedience of a wounded spirit; but while you fancy that your stern interdicts have blocked up the access to passion, you have only taught to smother what never can be extinguished. Oh! rather cherish, with liberal soul, the expanding fruitfulness of virtuous feeling; conscious, that on you are fixed the chaste desire, the constant hope, the willing deference; conscious, that the vow, the sacred vow given at the altar, remains unpolluted; conscious, that in your circling arms you hold undefiled purity, and that only the love, that spiritual existence, that ideal transport,

 which

which darts its warmest, most intense rays on you, is shared, in simple faith and honour, with your fellow creatures. What a picture is this! How unlike the foul, distorted one that the world too often presents! The one is a blooming Elysium, full of perpetual sweets, that never pall upon the sense; the other, is a hideous desart, a gloomy, savage, and barren waste, where the eye meets nothing that cheers or enlivens; all is solitude, all is sorrow, and anguish, and pining lamentation.

It is thus only, my friend, that I can account for the infelicities of a state that seems, in its nature, formed to shed perennial bliss round the steps of man. Why is it we adore, and almost deify, the sex in its single state; that we too often execrate and abhor them in the married? Why is it that the very object, which six months ago, perhaps, appeared to us possessed of all that earth could offer worth enjoyment, is now viewed with indifference,

ference, perhaps with loathing? Gross and sensual minds would find an easy solution of this: they place all in the momentary gust of animal delight; but with the bestial hopes of the voluptuary I have nothing to do. I would address myself to men of feeling, to men, who merit that appellation, from the exercise of those high faculties by which we are ennobled,—them it is I ask, whence is this change? Whence, but because we mutually exact a line of conduct after marriage so hostile to all the cherished feelings of the human heart, that compliance weds us with bitterest anguish, and contention leaves us exposed to the silent scorn or loud opprobrium of our fellow creatures. What an alternative! Can it then be surprising, that we find such general misery the constant attendant upon this state? Alas! here, as in many other cases, blinded by a dull obedience to prescriptive custom, we resign ourselves, unresistingly, to the torrent that overwhelms

overwhelms us, nor ask whither we are going, till to return is no longer possible.

You must confess, my friend, that this picture is just. You must confess also, that every thing would be gained by the suppression of those prejudices which now darken it, and the cordial reception of that mutual faith, integrity, and honour, which I wish to be the bulwark of the married state.

Perhaps it will be said, that by conceding too much liberty, we should facilitate the opportunities for error to the weaker sex; (it is *our* vices that have made *them weaker*, if they be so;) that by allowing them the freedom of heart and mind, we expose them to the hazards of personal contamination; that where the feelings are warmly excited, where an affection subsists towards an individual, it is not always easy to answer for the results that may ensue from particular moments and particular situations. To all this I have a short reply—the woman,

man, who is not the guardian of her own honour; who is chaste only while she is watched, and while she remains untried,—is already a libertine in her heart: the virtue of such a woman could give me no pleasure. But so rooted am I in the opinion, that a generous confidence will, in every case, meet with noble treatment, (except from most degraded beings) that not only do I think it the happiest safeguard of honour, but that a person, who, being harassed and insulted with perpetual doubts and suspicions, becomes the criminal he is thought, would, if confided in with liberal and generous faith, feel a tenfold motive to vindicate, by the purity of his conduct, the virtue that is gratuitously assigned to him. Morality is never more powerfully enforced than when already supposed to exist.

But I will put the case still closer. Let us suppose a woman of interesting manners, agreeable figure, a feeling heart,

and liberal, enlarged ideas, married. The man she has selected may not be exactly that person who could make her most happy; though this is a very material circumstance. However, I will leave nothing to situation or defect; therefore, I take it for granted, that he is, in every respect, calculated to fill the wishes of such a woman. So circumstanced, she finds her domestic circle adequate to every desire of her soul: mutually dear to each other, life is to them a round of sweets into which the bitterness of existence rarely obtrudes. Each morning brings with it new delights; each evening promises untried joys for the morrow. Blest in themselves, blest in their children, in their friends, what can this world offer to them of enjoyment beyond? You will reply, nothing: but you mistake the ignorance of other joys for their impossibility. I answer—much —for the range of social happiness is boundless, and every step opens to the wanderer

wanderer unexpected visions of bliss, and unhoped for realities of exquisite delight. Contentment is ignorance: we rest satisfied in our present state only until we have learned to form ideas of a happier; and the pining restlessness of the heart sends us constantly in quest of that happier one.

Let us, however, suppose that within this circle of perfect tranquillity and bliss a new object presents itself. He has looked upon this paradise with no envious eyes; he comes not to desolate and destroy; he comes not to blight the fair flower of joy, and having plucked its pride and beauty, leave a withered stem to tell its faded glories; he comes not to shed insidious poison in the heart, to corrupt its healthfulness and spread infection through its inmost fibres: No; he comes a candidate for the placid wreath of friendship, love, and peace; he comes to offer up the honest feelings of his bosom in fair exchange; he demands the

portion

portion of no man; he receives, what may be given without injury; he returns, what may be accepted without crime: he does not diminish the sources of another's felicity; he only opens a new one for himself; he asks the performance of no duties; he would disdain to weaken the discharge of those that are prescriptive; he does not seek to establish new privileges, nor even to share those that are exacted; he aspires only to participate in smiles, in words, in actions; in smiles that speak of innocence, in words that tell of virtue, in actions that breathe purity and honour. On these he feasts—oh! surely a blameless repast;—on these his heart riots undisturbed; and these give birth to feelings pure as the nameless thoughts of infancy itself.

And will it be said, that if this new object be cherished with love and affection, there must necessarily be a falling off in the sincerity of the conjugal duties? If it be so, the cause is to be sought

sought in a radical defect of the moral system of the delinquent, not in the feelings now excited. A man or woman of real honour, of delicate and refined principles, is incapable of vice; they view it with horror and disgust. They are neither so volatile nor so depraved as to quit the path of strict integrity, and follow every wandering meteor that happens to cross their steps; but neither are they so self-debased as to shrink from the reception and nurture of all honourable, interesting, and consolatory feelings. What may be termed *love* is a sort of aerial existence; it lives in sighs and looks, that are full of imaginary meanings; its hopes and fears, its half-suppressed delights, form a source of exquisite enjoyment to elevated, and only to elevated minds; its highest raptures are those which are farthest removed from sense; its most exalted charms are but visionary dreams that hover round the infected mind; its most precious gifts are words of dubious kindness where the

heated.

heated fancy has full room to act and point their application. This mental, this spiritual passion is capable of imparting such joys to the life of man, that the full heart rests satiated with indefinable delights. And I ask you most seriously, my friend, what prejudice to the marriage state can arise from the existence of such a passion in conjunction with every legitimate and just feeling that belongs to this state? What is detracted from it? Nothing. What duty is impeded by its presence? None. It is only a secondary inmate of the heart, in which a superior dwells enshrined, and must for ever dwell unless the sanctuary be already corrupted. With the latter it never can contend, for its wishes and desires are opposite. It serves to embellish and enliven the road of life, by opening new opportunities for pleasure; it improves and enlarges the sphere of affection, and it serves to generate a feeling of ourselves, a decent and a laudable

pride

pride in viewing ourselves esteemed and beloved without even the apprehension of an interested motive.

I know you will say that this pure and immaculate picture can rarely be found, or, if found, it must be in very exalted and liberal bosoms: and that the dissemination of such a principle would lead to injury, because only a chosen few are capable of receiving it in a proper way. I do not deny all this: Corrupt and degraded minds will extract poison from any thing: but this has nothing to do with the possibility of such a passion taking place in purer natures. Shall we hate the sun because he breeds maggots in carrion, as well as spreads the smiling harvest o'er the land?

"But," you say, "what return can I expect? Here seems to you all the difficulty, and all the danger." What return can I expect! The equivalent of what I give—purity and honour. Step forth, stern moralist, and level all your

thunders

thunders here, they will fall in vain: shew, if you can, that God or nature has ordained one object only to the feeling heart; that love, chaste and spotless as the hopes of consanguinity, pure as the pleasures of kindred minds, cannot build its throne within the precincts of wedded faith and duty. Do you not think, my friend, that when you would thus contract the circle of human affection, when you would establish the impossibility of such virtue as I here speak of, you pronounce a bitter and unmerited reproach upon mankind? What is there so saintly or so holy, what is there so austerely sanctimonious in such connexions, that you should suppose them either chimerical, or dangerous? Heavens! have we then sunk so despicably low that moderate virtue is to be gazed at as a phenomenon, or derided as an imposture? Is the age for ever passed, in which honour, and integrity, and purity, and worth, may mingle with the deeds of man, and

find

find a generous confidence in human kind? Labour not so industriously to degrade your fellow-creatures. More harm has been done to the cause of morals by the cynical declamations and peevish doubts of those who exhort to the practice of virtue, than by the most open andwanton incentives to vice that debased minds can fabricate. It can hardly be conceived, with what a noble energy a man is incited to the pursuit of all that is great and noble, who is already believed to be sincere and successful in his endeavours: but the bursting flame is most certain to be extinguished by cold and sullen doubts, by morose prognostics of failure, and by subtle insinuations of insincerity. Suspicion is a baleful canker that undermines with deadly force: a generous mind, caught in its toils, shrinks from the contest, and disdains a vindication: nor is this all; disgusted with a world in which the garb of innocence is no protection from wrongs

and

and insult, it abandons the hopeless career, and, in order to be social, becomes depraved. There cannot be a situation more hateful, or more afflictive to a truly liberal and ingenuous person, than to be suspected of equivocal or disgraceful conduct, at the very moment when every impulse of his heart, when every thought and every feeling is sacred to virtue. Stung with indignation to be so pestered by the gross conceptions of vulgar minds, he scorns to explain, and rather chooses to walk his road, upheld by the proud consciousness of his own integrity, dignified and unbending amid the gathering taunts of ignorance and malevolence, than stoop to soothe the causeless rancour by what might be deemed a compulsory justification. Even so, my friend, I might have disdained to appeal from my own heart to your judgment; and if, in this case, I have shewn a docility not native to me, ascribe it to that fervid friendship for you which animates my heart, and ever must animate

animate it while I remain sensible of my own existence. But I exhort you to discard, what I cannot but consider as a prejudice of no common magnitude: think nobly of your species when you can: believe me, it were better and more honourable to confess that successful villany had practised on your generous and manly confidence, than to boast with what expert collusion you have foiled knaves at their own game, while you have, at the same time, perhaps, planted a thorn in the breast of innocence and truth. Remember, there is no virtue really unattainable to an ardent mind engaged in the pursuit.

Not content however with directing your own anathemas against me, you come armed with foreign aid, and seek to overwhelm me with musty scraps of unwholesome morality. You quote a churchman's ethics! Fy, my friend! Could a poet paint the glories of the rising sun, by looking at it through a

smoked glass? And what a fantastic figure would the pure and sublime virtue I am now speaking of appear, trammelled with the forms of schools, hemmed round with the arbitrary impediments thrown in her way by vulgar minds, and tricked forth in the saintly imbecility of a priest's creed! Shall we judge of manhood's vigorous prime, its beauty, strength, and grace, by looking on a poor dungeon slave, bowed down with fetters, and pining in wretchedness? or shall we limit virtue's widest empire by the sordid estimation of book-trained minds, which, peeping through the spectacles of ancient form and usage, see just what lies before them, and dare not look beyond? In honest truth I do believe that you yourself despise the maxim you have quoted. You will not deem it necessary that I should reply directly to it; the whole tenor of this letter is a reply to that execrable system, which renders marriage a bondage: but your author

thor has o'er-topped them all, by the unequivocal assertion, that all behaviour that tends to captivate the affections of a married woman is a barbarous intrusion upon the peace and virtue of a family! A fanatic, in the remorseless fury of his heart, could not have denounced a greater curse upon social intercourse, or have degraded, more intensely, the sympathies of mankind! What a hateful lesson does this teach us; and what a solemn horror ought every woman to have at the idea of marriage, if she is to shut up each avenue to feeling, and to regard every man, who would seek to hold a place in her affections, as a "barbarous intruder upon her peace and virtue." Say she be amiable, lovely and innocent; how then? Is a man to fly from the commerce of such qualities as from a pest, because the owner of them wears a ring upon her finger? And this he *must* do—for if he look upon them he must admire—where he admires he will

 surely.

surely love—and whom he loves he must wish to possess the esteem and affection of, and will strive so to do—but then, he is a "barbarous intruder"—at least, so vulgar and sensual minds account him, that never felt one throb of genuine virtue, and who are unable, therefore, to separate a pure and spotless feeling of the heart from a gross and bestial impulse of the body. Forsooth! these are right learned moralists, who draw their maxims from impurity itself and set them forth to sale as genuine.

I am well aware of a perpetually occurring objection here, and one which you indeed have not entirely omitted. It will be said, that though there may be some whose passions are so tutored as to keep within the bounds of virtue and of honour, yet there are many, and they are the majority, who never dream of such exalted purity, and whose aim, open or implied, is sensual gratification. These last, therefore, may be considered as

as "barbarous intruders," for their hope is, ultimately, to ravage and destroy: and it is allowable to pronounce, as a general truth, that to which there are but few exceptions. But, my friend, there is no fallacy of the human mind so deep-rooted, so universal, and so dangerous as the love of forming what are called general truths. It is only necessary to observe single events and to pronounce them general. Instances there are, of men who corrupt wedded faith and duty, and dash, with bitterness, the cup of domestic comfort; therefore, these sapient moralists conclude that every man who seeks to gain the esteem of a married woman is a "barbarous intruder," and then, they proceed to denounce a sweeping, unqualified anathema, against all such. There is so much of obvious absurdity and cruelty in this, that I should not have deigned to expose it, were it not for the bad effects which I conceive such precepts to have.. They so impe-

riously

riously limit the boundaries of vice and virtue, and so arbitrarily fix a base construction upon a man's conduct, that they corrupt and vitiate the heart, by their implied impossibility of any thing generous or noble in human nature. Aimless labour is consolatory to no one: and who is there will care to nourish and expand sentiments of worth and dignity, when he feels assured that their existence is deemed impossible by the world, and that to pretend to them, would be to incur the charge of hypocrisy and dissimulation?

But even in the very principle this maxim is erroneous. It supposes a man deliberately planning the ruin of an innocent female and the destruction of a family's peace; concerting a regular series of circumstances which are likely and are intended to lead to that end. Will you call me mad or foolish, when I tell you that I absolutely cannot persuade myself of the existence of such a being? The deliberate

deliberate seducer is an arch villain almost beyond human comprehension. I mean, the man who coolly plans his schemes from the diabolical pleasure of wickedness and infamy; who is ensnared by no unexpected situation; who is driven by no sudden impulse, by no momentary gust of passion: but, who perpetrates a criminal deed from the sole wish to create misery, and triumph over fallen innocence. God of Heaven! can there be a man so lost to human feelings, so sunk in desperate vice, so utterly engulphed in the maddening vortex of sensual passion, as to prey upon his fellow-creatures like a ravening monster: to feed his eyes with misery and anguish; to glut himself with woe; and riot in the screams and blasphemies of unmitigated, phrenzied depravity, the offspring of his licentious pleasures? To do all this with deliberate consciousness, and to exult at the completion of his selfish and infernal schemes?—Oh! innocent, compared to such,

such, if such can be, the common spoiler of female virtue, who, a prey to nature's fiercest impulse, chance and the loved object of his vows concurring, scarcely knows the crime he does, but rises from his sated passions ashamed and fearful of himself. The one is the malignity of a demon; the other, the error of a man.

I have, thus, replied to your several arguments, and I have sought to vindicate, not only *my* situation in particular, but such situations in general. I have endeavoured to shew that marriage, as it is contemplated by some persons, is, and must be, a bitter slavery; that it is capable, however, of producing the most solid of all earthly enjoyments; and that virtue, wedded or single, is precious from its own innate value and energy. That I have convinced you, I doubt; for I know that my opinions are heterodox: I am myself, however, convinced, and the calm approval of one man of sense and feeling, will, in my estimation, outweigh

outweigh the censures of the crowd, or the applauses of the vain.

I know you will participate in the fears that now fill my own mind, were these maxims to be superficially acted upon. I do not forget what narrow bounds separate truth from falsehood; and that there are individual truths, whose promulgation might be dangerous to general happiness. Every thing which is most valuable and dear to man, whether in the moral, political, or physical world, may be licentiously abused and perverted, and there are some precepts of morality whose abuse may do more harm than their most rigorous application to effective virtue can do good. What may be practically right, may be, abstractedly, wrong. Particular circumstances may make it practically right to depose, and put to death, a tyrannical prince; but, it would be a false and monstrous doctrine that every tyrannical prince should be deposed and put to death,

death, for, in conjunction with his existence, there might be a concurrence of other circumstances which would make it an infinitely less evil to submit than to resist. The mind shrinks back astonished when it reflects how little of pure and unmixed truth there is; I mean of truth that is superior to the influence of local and temporary circumstances.

I agree with you, that few, very few, would be found either capable or willing to understand my sentiments upon connubial freedom. But you must not misconceive me. It never was my wish to throw down the wholesome restraint of custom upon *existing* manners and principles. To give liberty to a lunatic is wanton cruelty—it is the mockery of mercy: but, could my voice be potential, I would excite the present generation to a reform which might operate, in its beneficial results, upon posterity. I do think that, by engrafting the love of virtue

virtue more strongly upon the hearts and minds of our children, they might claim a larger allowance for the feelings of nature than the corrupt and rotten morality of the present times can permit; and by this claim they would enlarge their own happiness. By exciting and fixing in their bosoms an unfeigned admiration of what is right, we, at the same time, establish a bulwark which will defend them against the influx of error: and let it be the eternal recollection of our minds when employed in this task, that the basis of true virtue has no external foundation; she has a figure and a form capable of being loved, adored, and followed, for themselves; and they who are thus her votaries, enjoy her prime and highest favours: but that sickly devotion which leans half upon outward show and mere temporal convenience, which walks only in the shadow of her majestic stature, not in her eye, or by her side, stands exposed to every fierce assault,

assault, and, feeling no inward source of strength, no self reverence, falls before the incantations of its adversary.

You made me tremble when, on a former occasion, you told me that by the dissemination of my ideas, the already lax bonds of matrimonial faith would be additionally loosened. I often hinted, indeed, how far I thought these ideas were likely to be perverted: but my thorough conviction, that the cause of vice and immorality is to be sought for in the inefficient conceptions of virtue with which we are filled, forbade me to withhold their application. Yet, that you may not have the *power* to misinterpret *me*, read here my creed.

I do believe, that there are, even in the present state of society, many married individuals to whom might be conceded a greater degree of freedom, in the reciprocal intercourse of the sexes, than is usually thought consistent with the state of wedlock; and that we are *capa-*

ble

ble of being so educated, as to render that freedom general: I also most heartily believe; that human happiness would be increased, by accommodating the state of marriage more to the natural sentiments and feelings of the human heart than it now is; but, if there be man or woman who could warp this liberty to adulterous and immoral purposes, they are basely criminal, and merit, and I hope would suffer, the general contempt and abhorrence of society. From my soul I loathe the deliberate violation of wedded faith and purity; and this violation, bad enough in man, is tenfold bad in woman; for, with the female character, we connect, almost intuitively, a spotless chastity, without which, we can consider them neither as amiable, as lovely, or as pleasing. Let every man and every woman, therefore, before they trust themselves to the possibility of error, closely examine their own hearts: let them (and *they* alone can do it) ascertain whether they

they are going to indulge honest or dishonest expectations: let them discover, what strength they have to stem, or turn aside, the current of temptation: and, if they are fairly satisfied of their own integrity and power, let them then partake a pleasure which was never meant to be denied to human nature: but if otherwise, if they would seek only to corrupt and debase, if they would seek to confound the limits of vice and virtue, and, under the mask of truth and generosity, gratify their own vile appetites, be their names infamous, their life without honour, and their death without hope!

Such, without uncharitableness I hope, would be my denunciation against the malignant adversary of domestic bliss. —Adieu.

CHARLES WILMOT.

CHAP. VIII.

I WAS now to prepare to accompany my uncle to London, and there, to become as one of his family. It was my father's wish, and I was cheerfully obedient. I may indeed say, that it was my own wish too; for the cheerless solitude of my paternal mansion, now that he was gone whose presence could have made a dungeon happy, rather appalled than delighted me. I prevailed, however, upon Sir James to pass the winter in Cumberland for the sake of Sophia, whose health had begun to be re-established, and who dreaded (such was already her conversion from fashionable follies) a repetition of London avocations.

Nor was I myself wholly disinterested in this request. Though I was filled with sorrow, as often my thoughts dwelt upon

upon the gloom that seemed to pervade every object that surrounded me, yet it was with difficulty that I could bring myself to think of leaving those objects. They were endeared to me by every thing that can endear a place. They were the scene of my childhood; of that joyous state which no human being ever contemplated without emotions of regret. They were the scene of every recollection that I could dwell upon with pleasure; and, of the *only* one that I could recall with pain. Every spot was connected, in my mind, with events that once delighted, but, which now delighted no longer: for *he* was departed, who shared them with me. Though my absence was to be but temporary, still it seemed to me like a banishment from my home, my kingdom, my asylum. I was to sojourn among strangers; and, I was to qualify my mind for the reception of new ideas, and my heart for the reception of new feelings.

One

One day, as Sophia and I were discoursing about this intended removal, I asked her what pleasures she thought London was capable of giving me.

"Why," said she, with an arch smile, "perhaps it will give you a husband: I am sure it will give you admirers."

I attempted to look grave at this: but such an innocent vivacity glistened in the eyes of Sophia, that I caught their expression, and smiled.

"You will be announced," continued she, "in all the fashionable circles, as a great heiress: immediately, your wit will be celebrated and your understanding will be admired: as for your beauty, no one was ever without that who had a fortune to bestow upon him who saw it! Then, your name will be *paragraphed* in the papers: your sayings will be repeated: and the same vehicle will give you lovers that you never saw, and husbands that you never heard of. Whenever you appear, there will be a sudden

irradiation of smiles: whenever you depart, the atmosphere will be nothing but sighs. At last, a duel will be fought between two rival beaus, and then you are arrived at the height of your renown. There is, indeed, another sort of glory, which some estimate very highly; that is when a fashionable milliner or *dress* maker (there are no mantua-makers now) calls a robe or pelisse after your name: and this will infallibly procure you the envy of your own sex."

"I perceive," said I, "that in this ironical picture of a London life, mind is expelled from the canvass. I fear, therefore, that I shall enjoy none of the honours which you predict. I shall leave those in full possession of them who *feel that they deserve them.*"

"Nay," replied Sophia, "do not despair. If you wish for intellectual enjoyment, you can go to the *Royal Institution*, where you may have it by the day, the week, or the month."

"I prefer

"I prefer mere folly," said I, "to the affectation of knowledge. It may be flattering to the pride of ignorance to attend lectures, and to talk of history and gas, of poetry and muriatic acid, of oxygen and hydrogen, of fugues and morals, of chords and diapasons, of levers and mechanical action; and of all other actions but those of common sense. True wisdom is the fruit of silence and meditation: but ear-knowledge may be bought at a cheap rate. There is not one of the fashionable loungers at this royal seminary for grown up children who can go beyond the *dicta* of their masters: some, I dare say, cannot even do so much: but it *is* possible, with a commonly retentive memory, to be able to repeat what they have heard; without, however, comprehending a single principle. It is this knowledge of nothing that renders female acquirements contemptible, and makes us prefer unoffending ignorance to pertinacious and insolent

pretension. If only those attended a lecturer who have qualified themselves to accompany him in all his deductions and illustrations, he would, probably, harangue to empty benches; or, at least, a comfortable back parlour would be spacious enough for his auditory: I mean, his female auditory."

"I am not inclined," said Sophia, "to dispute the truth of your assertions. It would be arrogance in me if I were. But I have heard many ladies, whose opinions are highly thought of, speak with great encomiums of this Institution."

"Did they attend it?"

"Yes."

"Have you ever known," added I, "a person condemn their own practices? If these same ladies had been induced to attend and patronize an exhibition of cock-fighting, they would have been equally eloquent in praise of that *accomplished pursuit*. But why should I speak disrespectfully of the *interesting*

science?

science? Princes and nobles, senators by birth and by delegation, lend *their* illustrious sanction to it: *they* do not blush to assemble round two wretched animals who are trained to mutual destruction, for the *amusement* of men! I am indignant when I read, in the public papers, of these proceedings, and the names of those who attend them. Public degeneracy precedes public ruin. The veneration of rank and birth is founded merely on opinion. A cobbler raised to a peer would command the respect of no one, because the meanness of his origin would be known and felt by his contemporaries: and if peers and princes degrade themselves to a level with the meanest, they must be content to endure the contempt of the nation. To return, however, to the first subject of our discourse. I am afraid that I shall be a stranger in those circles whence all my prophesied honours are to emanate."

"I am sure you will," replied Sophia, "and I hope also, that, by the aid of your example

example and my entreaty, I shall be able to prevail upon my father to grant me an immunity. How happily, methinks, could we occupy our hours with such objects as would dignify the application. Besides, my father has acquaintance of such a cast as the wisest might not disdain to hold discourse with."

This was a delightful intimation, and it was the first that I had heard of it. I eagerly enquired further, and found, now, such hopes, worthy of entertainment, as cheered and consoled me. I knew indeed that London, beyond any other spot, perhaps, of the habitable globe, was the place where the highest enjoyments of mind were to be tasted; but I knew also, that these enjoyments were not so common as to preclude the necessity of seeking for them. As a female, I felt that I might live in the very region of wisdom, and yet "burst in ignorance;" for, unless the means of access were facilitated to me, the forms and decorum of society would debar me from the

the fruition. I dreaded the irksome trammels of fashionable duties, and had silently resolved not to sacrifice my judgment to any practices that were repugnant to it. I knew that I could find no pleasure from any pursuits that consisted of folly, affectation, grimace, and perhaps vice: and the opinion of a few fluttering, unimportant beings I held too cheap, to sacrifice, for *it*, the conscious approval of my mind, and the quiet peace of my heart. It would, indeed, have been no very arduous contest to resist where there was no temptation; and what temptation could I find in the frivolous amusements which form so large a portion of the performances of many individuals? But I now felt relieved from these apprehensions, and I was not without hope that as the affection of Sir James had instigated him to lead Sophia forth to public view, the same affection might be more beneficially employed, in associating her with such society as might realize the

the words of the poet, by combining "the feast of reason" with "the flow of soul."

Our discourse was interrupted by my uncle, who entered the room where we were sitting, and, as the evening was fine, proposed a walk. We assented, but my heart partook not, as it was wont, of those simple pleasures which presented themselves. To me the setting sun was no longer glorious; the birds were without melody; the song of the rustic was dissonant, and the magnificence of nature was tame. I beheld every thing in the troubled mirror of my own mind. The exacerbation of grief was passed, and there remained now only that placid dejection which I did not wish to part with, and which prevailed, principally, when I was occupied about any thing which strongly reminded me of my departed sire.

As we were proceeding along, our discourse, without any violent transition, passed, from the contemplation of visible nature,

nature, to its representation in pastoral poetry. Sophia spoke warmly in its praise, without distinctly defining the kind that she admired. My uncle was pleased with the polished lines of Pope, in which, however, there is nothing which can be called excellent, except the art of the versification. The images, as has been observed by every critic and commentator from Dennis down to Warton, are incongruous and therefore faulty.

"I think," said Sir James, "that Mr. Roscoe, who, in his *Life of Lorenzo*, observes that few attempts have been made, in England, to adopt the provincial idiom of the inhabitants to the language of poetry, is not right, when he attempts to assign, as the cause of this, the inaptitude of our language for genuine pastoral poetry. Perhaps the cause may rather be sought for in the circumstance, that neither Spenser nor Gay (the only two who have attempted these pastorals with any kind of success) were brought up amid those

those scenes which they had to describe, or familiarized with that language which they had to employ."

"Such would be my opinion," I replied. "It is impossible that a writer can transfuse into his page feelings which he does not possess. Lady Wortley Montague has produced some agreeable town eclogues: and her coadjutors, Pope and Gay, produced two, infinitely more in character than any of their others. The spirit of poetry is to be caught from the real existence of things."

"I think so," said my uncle. "Words may convey images to the mind, but they will not impress them upon the heart, unless they convey also those minute features of general resemblance which awaken sympathy. A man who has never emerged from the vicinity of London, might produce pastorals full of rural images; full of *crooks*, and *kine*, and *Corydon*, and *Phyllis*; and *pipe*, and *sheep*. But he possesses these words only by transmission:

transmission : he has never looked abroad upon nature ; or, if he have, it has been at that period of life when he has viewed only external nature."

" You mean to say," added Sophia, " that he has not lived among shepherds and shepherdesses."

" I mean," said Sir James, " to say that he is a stranger to what he attempts to describe. The matter may be made intelligible by supposing that a rustic were to write *Court Pastorals.* He might, by the help of a dictionary and books, collect the terms which he wanted to use ; and, when he had combined them in a certain manner, he might fancy that they were faithfully representative of the language and manners of a court. But they would be deficient in what is the very essence of such compositions--- they would want verisimilitude : they would want the resemblance of truth."

" It was the consciousness of such a defect," said I, " that made poor Collins pronounce

pronounce his *Oriental Eclogues,---Botany Bay Pastorals:* yet I have always thought that the second of them was sufficiently marked by eastern imagery to save it from the general censure."

"There is nothing," continued my uncle, "which can supply the want of actual observation. There is, indeed, a certain stock of hereditary images which is considered as lawful property by every versifier; and it is easy to see when these images are employed as entailed possessions. To view Nature with the eye of a poet is not every man's gift; but no man was ever a poet, who viewed her, as Dryden expresses it, "through the spectacles of books." I speak of Nature, here, as including the moral as well as the physical world. Her combinations are, in both, boundless; and let no one, therefore, be deterred from the enterprise by the persuasion that all the vantage ground of fame is pre-occupied."

"The great delight," said I, "which is

felt

felt in reading Thomson, arises, chiefly, from the happy minuteness of some of his delineations of visible nature. This excellence has been done ample justice to by Joseph Warton in his *Essay* on Pope: but I am surprised that the *Seasons* have yet found no critic or commentator who has examined them with that precision which might establish both their beauties and their defects."

"Perhaps," said my uncle, "the reason may be, that the general excellence of Thomson hurries the reader along in an ecstacy of pleasure which allows the mind no leisure for critical examination. Where there is much to praise, it seems almost invidious to censure."

"I believe, however," I replied, "that an acute critic might find in Thomson an accumulation of errors that would astonish his admirers. His language is often unequivocally defective: it is turgid and tautological, and labours with dignity like a fishing-boat in a storm. Dr. Johnson

Johnson was sensible of this when he pronounced it to be "too exuberant," and that it sometimes "filled the ear more than the mind;" and Blair (whose judgment as a critic, however, I do not estimate very highly) says that it is harsh, and deficient in ease and distinctness."

"I do not wholly agree with you in your opinion of Thomson's style," said my uncle; "but I am perfectly with you in regard to the accuracy with which he has observed nature, and the felicity with which he has embodied his observations. There is an irresistible charm attached to the happy delineation of those minute qualities of things. I remember a passage in Burns, describing the action of frost upon water, which I think truly excellent:

> The silent moon shone high o'er tow'r and tree;
> The chilly frost, beneath the silver beam,
> Crept, gently-crusting, o'er the glittering stream.

The image in these lines is presented to the mind with all the force of reality."

We

We now returned towards the house, not unwilling to enjoy the delights of the fireside, which the coldness of an October evening rendered acceptable; and prepared to "sip the fragrant lymph" of the poet.

CHAP. IX.

"I AM an enthusiastic admirer of Burns," said I, as we were sitting at tea: "not of his moral character, for that every one must view with contempt and indignation; but of his poetical. His poetry is characterised by every quality that can delight the mind or affect the heart. It is warm, vigorous, full of imagination, and full of the native fire of genius: rich in expression, and possessed of that energy which is always the attendant upon pure inspiration."

"Of Burns it may be said," replied my uncle, "that whatever he wrote upon he embellished."

"You may as well quote your authority," said I, smiling. "Your eulogium is but a version of Johnson's line upon his friend, poor Goldsmith:

'Nullum quod tetigit non ornavit.'

"I care

"I care not who invented the praise," replied my uncle, "so as it be applicable: nor am I sure that I can be accused of plagiarism; for the epitaph of Johnson was not, at that time, present to my thoughts. Hurd would exonerate me from the charge. However, to return to Burns. His genius was universal: in satire, in humour, in description, in pathos, in sentiment, he was equally great; but his satire and his humour partake of the soil whence they sprung: they are rude, forceful, and manly; they are not polished into elegance, nor laboured into ease."

"To his other qualities," said Sophia, "you will not, surely, refuse to add that of sublimity, when you recollect those lines in Tam O'Shanter, which I will read to you from this volume of his works.

Coffins stood round, like open presses,
That shaw'd the dead in their last dresses;
And, by some dev'lish cantrip slight,
Each in its cauld hand held a light.

By which, heroic Tam was able
To note, upon the haly table,
A murderer's banes in gibbet airns:
Twa span-lang wee, unchristen'd bairns;
A thief, new cutted frae a rape,
Wi' his last gasp his gab did gape;
Five tomahawks wi' blude red rusted;
Five scymitars wi' murder crusted:
A garter, which a babe had strangled,
A knife, a father's throat had mangled,
Whom his ain son o' life bereft,
The grey hairs yet stack to the heft.

"The last line," said my uncle, "conveys an image sublimely horrid: I could never read it without feeling my blood run cold. It exhibits not only the parricide that is committed, but it fills the mind with an idea of the barbarity of the son and of the struggles of the father which is truly awful."

"There is," said I, "in the second *Duan* of his *Vision*, a strain of composition, different indeed from that which my cousin has just read, but not less excellent. Perhaps," continued I, looking

for the passage, "Sophia will be kind enough to read the stanzas, as she became a volunteer in the cause." She smiled, and began.

'Of these am I—Colla my name;
And this district as mine I claim,
Where once the Campbells, chiefs of fame,
Held ruling pow'r:
I mark'd thy embryo, tuneful flame,
Thy natal hour.

'With future hope, I oft would gaze,
Fond, on thy little, early ways;
Thy rudely caroll'd chiming phrase,
In uncouth rimes,
Fir'd at the simple, artless lays
Of other times.

'[illegible] thee seek the sounding shore,
Delighted with the dashing roar;
[illegible] when the North his fleecy store
Drove through the sky,
I saw grim Nature's visage hoar
Strike thy young eye.

'Or, when the deep-green mantled earth
Warm cherish'd ev'ry flow'ret's birth,

 And

And joy and music pouring forth
In ev'ry grove,
I saw thee eye the gen'ral mirth
With boundless love.

'When ripen'd fields and azure skies
Call'd forth the reaper's rustling noise,
I saw thee leave their ev'ning joys,
And lonely stalk
To vent thy bosom's swelling rise
In pensive walk.

'When youthful love, warm-blushing strong,
Keen-shiv'ring shot thy nerves along,
Those accents grateful to thy tongue,
Th' ador'd *name*,
I taught thee how to pour in song
To soothe thy flame.

'I saw thy pulse's maddening play
Wild send thee pleasure's devious way,
Misled by fancy's meteor ray,
By passion driv'n;
But, yet, the light that led astray
Was light from heav'n.

'I taught thy manners painting strains
The loves, the ways of simple swains,

Till

Till now, o'er all my wide domains
Thy fame extends,
And some, the pride of Coila's plains,
Become thy friends.

'Thou canst not learn, nor can I show
To paint with Thomson's landscape glow;
Or wake the bosom-melting throe
With Shenstone's art;
Or pour, with Gray, the moving flow
Warm on the heart.'

"With what a natural consciousness of genius," I exclaimed, "does the poet maintain his dignity in these verses! with the same consciousness that animated Dryden when he wrote his preface to his *Annus Mirabilis*; and with the same consciousness that will always animate every one who *has* genius."

"These stanzas," said my uncle, "have but one fault; and that is, the praise bestowed on Shenstone, and the folly of placing him in the same verse with Thomson and Gray. I know of nothing which Shenstone has written that has

the

the power of awakening the bosom with melting throes. His elegies are, all of them, too artificial for that effect, if we except that upon *Jesse*, which is not without pathos. I will venture to say, that the poems of Shenstone will be remembered with indifference, when those of Burns will live in the heart and mind of every reader that has taste to admire and feelings to estimate them."

"I have been told," said Sophia, "by those whose authority ought to have weight, for they were his countrymen, that his poems, in the Scottish dialect, are distinguished by an uncommon felicity of diction, and an accuracy of delineation which afford unmingled delight."

"In his songs," I replied, "in his smaller pieces, and in some of his descriptions, he has great merit. I remember a song of his which begins,

Farewell, thou stream that winding flows
Around Maria's dwelling,

that

that struck me as being incomparably plaintive and beautiful. The pieces too entitled 'To Mary in Heaven'—and 'Highland Mary' breathe a strain of the most pathetic poesy."

"His countrymen," replied Sir James, "admire much the patriotic ode of 'Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled'; but I, who cannot feel the ardor of a North Briton, consider this as one of the least prominent of his productions."

"In whatever light," said I, "Burns is considered, I am inclined to regard him as one of the few great geniuses who arise to illuminate the hemisphere of mind. Education had nothing in the formation of his character; what he wrote was the pure offspring of native genius: and, if we reflect how excellent he was in all; what various powers he has shewn in paths that are amongst the highest of poetical delineation, we may, without much offence to justice, place him by the

the side of the greatest names this country has produced."

"Have you read his life by Dr. Currie, and his letters?" enquired Sophia of her father.

"Yes," he replied, "and I was much pleased with its ingenuous character. But the letters of Burns I do not estimate very highly. The style is sometimes good; but I do not think them natural either in expression or sentiment. He is a rustic, labouring to be a fine gentleman. You see in him, not the native ease of polished manners; but the laboured freedom and obtrusive carelessness of a man who finds himself suddenly in good company and wishes to assimilate with them at once. There is a constant effort visible, and a ridiculous affectation of courtly indifference, which betray, too evidently, that they are assumptive. He prates too about independence even to disgust: he mingles

gles it with every subject: he nauseates you with it; and he does this, not only once to every one he writes to (for that were venial,) but repeats it, till at last the reader feels a sort of suspicion creep over his mind whether its existence were not rather verbal than real. Observe, I by no means censure this quality in Burns: if there be a man on earth who would do homage to it, it is myself. But I condemn the affected frequency with which he brings it forward."

"In my opinion," said I, "the *only* good quality he possessed was that rigid independence, that jealous watchfulness of individual dignity, which bespoke, not only the *man*, conscious of his rank in the scale of being, but the *poet*, who felt his superiority above the lucre-gifted, sordid, and supercilious mortals, placed, by artificial society, in a higher rank. I reverence him more for the steady independence of his mind (as it appears from his writings, and as it is vouched by

his

his conduct) than for his genius: the latter might have belonged to any one as well as to Burns; it might have been allied (as in Pope) to a soul imbued with baseness and servility: but the noble path of independence which he marked out for himself was peculiarly his own; and while he towered above the rest of mankind by his resplendent talents, he excelled them, no less, by that quality which creates and ennobles virtue (where virtue *can* exist); which secures felicity to the breast in whatever station of existence, and which gives to the actions of rectitude a superadded energy and excellence. It has been said, by an eminent writer now living, that Burns carried this haughtiness of mind too far, and that it imparted a degree of roughness and severity to his general deportment that was unpleasing. This last may be true: indeed, it would almost, inevitably, take place from obvious causes; but that he carried it *too far*, ne-

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ver ought to be asserted by any one, who knows how to appreciate the dignity of human nature in general, and Burns' situation in particular. Burns was of humble birth; he had moved in a sphere of life which is regarded, by the contumelious and superficial, with contempt. Burns knew and felt this; and he knew also, that even when the voice of his country had hailed him as a poet, there would not be wanting those who would still think it a condescension to visit him or mingle in his society. The pride of birth and wealth is, of all others, the most durable and the most disgusting. Burns therefore resolved, with a just magnanimity of character, to make his countrymen respect him not only as a poet but as a man. But it is to be lamented that he was ignorant of the basis of all true respect, which is *self*-reverence."

"Ay," said my uncle; "and how painful it is, after contemplating so bright a path, to reflect, that some of the most

degrading

degrading vices of our nature appeared there and too often sullied its glory. We turn away, with disgust, from the hideous picture, and find no clue by which to explain the phenomenon of a soul, so finely tempered as his was, darkened with all the filthiest spots that our corrupted nature knows. Burns, morally speaking, was, perhaps, the most degraded man of genius that ever existed. Yet, let us not apply, too severely, the censure of a virtuous mind: let us consider how he was placed, and all that he had to combat with, and, perhaps, we should rather pity than condemn. Poor Burns! Had it been thy fate to have found patrons instead of admirers; to have met with men who were willing to assist with their counsel and protect with their power, instead of jovial companions who sought only to enjoy thy convivial irradiations; perhaps, even now, you might have delighted an admiring age, and commanded still more powerfully the applause of

posterity.

posterity. You found men willing to receive your labour without reward*, because they knew not the delicacy of remunerating a man of genius and of thy ardent character; or, who insulted, while they pretended to reward. It may be recorded, as a stigma upon his country, that Robert Burns, who was flattered, courted, and admired, by the rich, the learned, the witty, and the proud, could obtain no higher office, no greater security against want, no ampler provision for his wife and family than an *exciseman's* place of *fifty* and afterwards *seventy* pounds a year; that when that man lay on the bed of sickness and of death, solicitation was needful to secure him from losing half of his scanty stipend; and that, when the agonies of dissolution were almost on him, the horrors of a jail compelled his high mind to beg the loan of

* Every reader of Burns' Life and Letters will know to what transaction this alludes.

five

five pounds to preserve him from being dragged, half dying, to a prison. Yes! and the man who had, for years, received the finest effusions of Burns' genius, the man who had enriched himself by the labours of Burns, the man who *once*, and *only once*, offered to remunerate him by *ten pounds*, that man, to whom the dying poet's prayer was made, poorly contented himself with sending *just* the sum demanded, though he *knew* it was predestined to discharge a debt, and that his unhappy friend (if I may profane the name) must still feel the same domestic wants, the same agonies of mind. This person has not blushed to publish the affecting letter of the expiring bard with the memorial of his own penurious conduct. That Burns was reduced to such a humiliation, must for ever call forth our pity; that his humiliation was so answered, must excite sentiments of indignation and contempt in every manly, in every liberal bosom. I deplore, I commiserate,

miserate, the one; I abhor, I despise, the other."

I had never, before, heard my uncle speak with such animation; and, as I sat and listened, I seemed to hear the accents of my dear father, so much resemblance of manner and voice prevailed in him at the moment. I was delighted to find him susceptible of enthusiasm; for so much the more would he be like his brother, and so much the more should I derive pleasure from his society.

When we separated for the night, my mind reverted to our conversation, and I dwelt with much pleasure upon the remembrance of my share in it which had endeavoured to vindicate the independent character of Burns. I had always been taught by my revered father to consider that quality, in man or woman, as the surest basis of effectual virtue: not that it would *necessarily* produce virtue, but that without it no virtue could be either regular or permanent. The mind in which

which it dwelt was prepared to resist every incitement to error, however specious might be the form under which it attempted to delude; whether it appeared as open and avowed profligacy, or whether it assumed the more enticing garb of custom, example, and persuasion of friends. And surely, without this power to resist, no man can rely upon what will be the tenor of his actions. It was a favourite maxim of my father's,

Sibi res, non se rebus, submittere.

In his own life he had conformed to this precept as much as was consistent with human fallibility; and, in every instance, he strove as far as possible to divest himself of the influence of prejudice, habit, or custom, and to estimate every step he took by the simple principles of absolute utility and relative propriety. He was accustomed to admit no man, or set of men, as his guide: *his* umpire was his own conscience; and that is a judge, which, suffered to speak out, and attended

to

to when speaking, can never mislead. But, to do all this, required a firm, independent character, which was not to be awed by the arrogant or soothed by the suppliant: an unbending consistency, which accommodated itself, not to expediency, but to the eternal dictates of truth.

These thoughts crowded upon my mind as I lay on my pillow, and hindered the approaches of sleep. I dwelt, in thought, upon the grandeur and energy of that independence which fits a human being so to act; and with the first dawn of day I arose, sleepless, from my bed, and wrote what follows in the preceding chapter. * I have introduced it here, because I do not remember to have seen the subject considered in the manner that I consider it, and because it *may be useful.*

CHAP. X.

There are few virtues that either ennoble or adorn human nature which have not a direct tendency to degenerate into their contrary vices. The line of separation, however obvious when contemplated in another, seldom fails to become indistinct when considered as existing in ourselves. Self-delusion, the common topic of complaint among moralists and declaimers, mingles, more or less, with all our decisions: one drop of its precious balm tempers every scrutiny we institute, but never with greater efficacy than when we would distinguish between our own vices and virtues; when we would assign to each its appropriate character and its proper sphere of action. But this is natural; nay, I could almost say necessary. Enemies, detractors, *candid friends*, abound on every side, who are active to detect

detect and ready to disclose the spots and blemishes of our nature: very few are those who can so far suppress the lurking envy in their bosoms as to acknowledge its brighter and more commendable parts. Since, therefore, man is and ought to be the instinctive guardian of his own honour, it is fitting that he should, himself, defend what every one is willing to resign to neglect and dilapidation. Yet, it is to be regretted that this principle, great, salutary, and noble in itself, should ever become the vehicle of oppressive error or the assertor of illegal immunities. But, what is more common than to hear a man, with all the warmth of sincerity, maintain, as the most unsullied purity, that which in reality approaches nearly to depravity and crime? In this manner brutality and ferocious savageness are dignified with the names of courage and bravery; supineness and inactivity aspire to the honours of active benevolence and philanthropy; kneeling and prayers

 demand

demand the reverence which is due only to sanctity of manners and purity of heart; passive abstinence from professed villany seeks the renown which should cover the triumphant struggles of suffering and contending virtue; and in this manner a conduct nearly allied to insolence and vulgarity too often hopes to be identified with dignified independence of character.

But let us not, while we lament the abuse of a virtue, forget its intrinsic excellence. The river which, when it bursts its barriers and sweeps before it the labours of the husbandman is deplored as an evil and an avenging scourge, receives our homage and our gratitude as it flows gently onward, giving fertility to the plain and beauty to the landscape.

Independence of character, of all earthly blessings, is that which a wise and honest man would most devoutly pray for. It is not only the source of every other virtue, but is itself a virtue of the highest order;

order; it secures to the heart the most sweet of all delights,—the gratulations of an approving conscience; it stamps upon our actions the proudest titles they can receive,—vigour, consistency, and principle. Nothing can exceed that calm tranquillity, that peaceful pride, which cheer and animate the mind upon a retrospect which is free from any galling sense of base, servile, or even equivocal conduct. The man* who can lay his hand upon his heart and exclaim, with conscious rectitude, "I have never forgotten the dignity of human nature," is a man more to be envied, in my estimation, than any other human being. He alone can look back upon the road of life, and behold a long extended path covered with sunshine and strewed with flowers; he alone can commune with his own heart, and come

* I say *man*, not because I would limit the virtue to him, for in kind, if not in degree, it should be equally found in my own sex. I use the word man, as the usual mode of delivering precepts.

from

from the enquiry with an unblenched countenance. Oh! what an achievement is this for the mind of man! an achievement, which, who that owns, does not feel that he is blest? And who is there, so lost to all the longings of an immortal soul, that would not think this a prize worth contending for?

I am aware how liable all general delineations are to error. When the mind is intent upon establishing some predominant truth, it often neglects the very process which is necessary for that purpose, and, submitting its faculties to the full force of gratuitous assumption, rather asserts than reasons. It is a task of no common difficulty to restrain the combinations of an ardent intellect, and make them wait on sober demonstration. Without this, however, we may compose rhapsodies, but cannot write truth. Wisdom, in its proper sense, is rarely an intuitive quality; it is the fruit of much meditation, much comparison, much labour,

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and a slow consolidation of various facts. He, therefore, who writes upon abstract points should carefully guard against the suggestions of fancy; he should discriminate between brilliant sentences, which contain maxims of so great latitude that they will adapt themselves to almost any event, and that precise and definite preceptive wisdom, which has been gradually elaborated with a special object in view. The one is the operation of a mind unaccustomed to close or logical deductions, rambling through many scenes, and throwing forth its produce with a careless hand, heedless how it assimilates; the other bespeaks an accurate and philosophic intellect, which, in the pursuit of knowledge, discards all superfluous parts, and concentrates, to a single centre, the scattered rays of much enquiry and research. In saying this, I perhaps only furnish a weapon wherewith to be myself destroyed; however, the gentle whispers of self-confidence bid me not retract it.

I wish

I wish not to be regarded as the advocate of a swelling insolence of deportment which prides itself upon disregarding the established forms of social intercourse; a sort of blustering, hectoring conduct that belongs rather to the bully than the gentleman, and which is more fit to frighten children than to move men. Yet, I have heard even this called independence; but from such independence, may heaven preserve every one I love. I have seen, also, a waspish petulance of behaviour equally mistaken; a behaviour that degrades the owner to a level with diseased infancy or doting decrepitude. I however acknowledge neither. *My* deity is a modest and retired goddess, who feels her own worth and knows her own station. She does not render her votary an offensive pest in society, whom wise men pity and even fools deride; but she gives him that amiable severity of principle, which serves to support the character of a man without violating the charities

of

of life. She bids him look with a steady eye upon events; strip off all their adventitious colouring; and constantly to remember, that the only true road to virtue is the straight one; she erects, in his breast, a tribunal whose dictates no earthly power can awe; she lights his eye with the pure flame of valour emanating from inward rectitude; she arms his heart with the firm mail of conscious truth, and tells him, that gold nor silver, titles nor dignity, increase, one atom, the native worthiness of man; she places, in his grasp, a spear of ethereal virtue, whose touch no corrupted action can endure; the fortitude *she* gives, is the heroism of internal strength, ready to rush forth when need calls, but else, calm as the ring dove brooding o'er her young; she bids you stem the torrent by silent inflexibility; not to wade and dash, and throw the water round you, telling the world with boisterous fury that you will get through; she bids you, too, preserve your

your mind erect, unbending as the oak, invulnerable as the rock; she plants there the sense of shame, and the love of worth, and she warns you that you never rouse the stinging scorpions of the one; she exhorts you that you cherish the balmy influence of the other; she writes upon your manly brow, truth, dignity and virtue, and inspires you to vouch the proud credentials with deeds of worth that spring from each; she spreads through your whole frame the ennobling sentiment, which swells at your heart, and tells you, that all are men, kindred with thyself, and equal in the eye of Him that made them; there is not a drop of blood flowing through your veins which does not, in its course, hourly proclaim this mighty truth, and, in proclaiming, sublimes you to your native reach. *This* is the independence of character I admire, and would inculcate: it is the noblest characteristic of a rational being, and can alone lay claim to the praises which

which unmingled virtue should obtain. Without it, servility, baseness, and vice creep in, infect the soul, spread the ulcerous gangrene of corruption, and sink the man despicably low even in his own estimation. With it,—to use the beautiful language of one who practised what he preached,—" it becomes our shield and " buckler, our helmet and crown; the " soul walks upright, nor stoops to the " silken wretch, because he hath riches; " nor pockets an abuse, because the hand " which offers it wears a ring set with " diamonds."

There are two spheres of life allotted for the exercise of this virtue, though, in my opinion, in one alone does it appear in all its native dignity and lustre. These two are PUBLIC and PRIVATE life: the world too often bows before the false idol of the former; but I am decidedly of opinion that the latter is the most illustrious field of action. I will explain this further. . .

Men

Men naturally rise with their situation. Great events call forth great exertions. The soul once roused, bounds with activity from point to point; it seems to expatiate in boundless space; to fill, with its conceptions, a new world. All that was before feeble and indecisive now assumes the firmness of principle; the slumbering fires are blown into flame, and that flame stimulates, supports, and pervades every action. A new being seems to take possession of us, and our whole moral system sustains a complete revolution.

At this juncture, too, the eyes of the *world* are upon us. Here is a superadded stimulus; a stimulus which impels the most torpid to deeds of greatness, and animates the aspiring to actions of immortality. Who could be less than great in such a case? Who would not feel every latent spark move within him, and range his veins with resistless force? Who that beholds a whole nation, perhaps

haps a world, thousands, millions of his fellow-creatures gazing at his every step, intent upon his every word, and ready, nay anxious, to receive with admiration the minutest action he performs; who would not in such a post be something more than human? Dull as the hind that ploughs the soil must he be, who would not soar above the rest of mankind! But, gross even to fatuity must that self-delusion be, which would cunningly persuade him that what he does he does from principle. No: ten thousand beings in the world at large, who wander now in cold obscurity, would do as much; would ascend to heights as glorious, and would beam with splendour as refulgent, though ambition which grasps at plans beyond a week's duration is now perhaps foreign to their souls.

Great men act from external impulsion. Their deeds are surrounded with a sort of showy grandeur, admirably suited to dazzle the eyes of the vulgar; they have

a gorgeous

a gorgeous clothing thrown about them well calculated to strike the senses. But, in fact, nothing is so easy as the *great actions* of these *great men*. For my own part, I seldom read of astonishing heroism, generosity, fortitude, and philanthropy, without feeling that I could, myself, have been as great, placed in similar circumstances; and this feeling I believe to be common to many. But, when I hear of, or meet with, any generous deed, with any exertion of character, with any silent manifestation of principle performed in the obscurity of domestic life, where there are no eager eyes to behold, no busy tongues to repeat, no echoes of renown to flatter, no applauses but the noiseless gratulation of the heart, then I feel what is necessary to the practice of virtue when performed for her sake alone; and I learn to estimate the intrinsic merits of those actions which obtain so large a share of admiration and renown. Who would not, like Regulus, have

have preferred death and extremest torture, admired, honoured and bewailed by the whole Roman people, and even by the enemy to whose vengeance he resigned himself, rather than by compliance with the fond entreaties of afflicted friends and relatives live neglected and despised, carrying at his heart a gnawing canker, to gall him as often as the name of Carthage sounded in his ears? Who would not imitate the self-devoted Decius in a sacrifice that embalmed his memory in the adoring hearts of his countrymen to the latest posterity? Oh! man knows not the heights of which he is susceptible, until impelled by powerful external agencies!

But, in this point of view, independence of character, and the grandeur of soul which results from it, must always be equivocal; while the sphere in which I would place its noblest exertions detracts nothing from its intrinsic worth, and adds every thing that can shed around

it, in the eyes of a wise man, additional lustre and attraction. Here, numberless are the instances which call this virtue into action. The poor man, and he that holds a middle station between poverty and wealth, daily feels the necessity of repressing the pride of riches and the insolence of power. Happy is he who has acquired that firmness of character which enables him, in spite of envy, in spite of malice, in spite of all the enginery with which lordly power would crush the humble, to maintain the dignity of a man, while he respects the rights of a citizen.

The rights of a citizen? Yes: every man, born in civilized society, possesses conventional rights which should be respected, which should not be wantonly violated; but here let us beware how we confound servile degradation and fawning humility with the uninfluenced dictates of the human heart.

Titles, pomp, money, splendour, are but the gewgaws of children intrinsically considered;

considered; but, invest man's lordly form with these attributes, and, lo! he walks forth with mien erect and scornful glance as though he owned a nature distinguished from the common herd. He looks down with ineffable contempt upon all who pursue a lower path in the great road of life; he exacts their homage; he is eager to quaff their adulation; he waits with impatience for the praises that are to resound in his ears; he swells and struts through existence, and at last makes his exit like the meanest individual. What? and am I, because his ancestors have heaped up wealth and bequeathed titles to him; because a silken ribbon graces his body; because trains of servants flutter round him and obey his nod; because he feeds upon costly fare, sleeps upon beds of down, and wantons unrestrained in nature's most profuse delights; am I, because scorn glances from his eye, because dignity waits upon his steps, and all the trickery

of the world's delusive colours hangs in variegated glare about him; am I, therefore, to cringe, to bow, to bend the knee, to teach my tongue a softened tone, my eye a milder glow, and all my motions put into the shackles of restraint and form; am I to seek new phrases, ransack language for modest and obsequious words, bend my soul beneath its temper, and hush the feelings springing in my heart, lest they should sound too roughly in his courtly ears; am I to do all this, and merely to lull the bloated pride of one whom nature has pronounced my fellow worm? Forbid it Heaven! Forbid it every manly sentiment of the soul! Forbid it every honest goad of indignation that springs from such debasement of the human form!

But it will perhaps be said, "when "these extrinsic distinctions are united "with virtue, the claim to respect is "then irresistible." What! can virtue receive any lustre, in the eyes of a wise man,

man, from wealth and titles? Does the good citizen, the amiable husband, the affectionate father, the steady friend, increase in virtue in proportion to his thousands and the list of titles appended to his name? The man who snatches me from impending ruin, shall I less warmly embrace him, shall I pour out less fervently my soul in thanks, according as he wears a laced or a ragged coat? Away with such philosophy! Virtue is in every sphere august and noble! In every sphere she demands, and ought to obtain, our respect, our reverence, our adoration.

It is a humiliating sight, when we behold talents that adorn the human character, talents that are the admiration of the world, talents which are exerted in the cause of the best interests of society; it is truly humiliating to behold such powers allied with servility of mind. Yet, what is so common? Look back upon the annals of the world; contem-

 plate

plate its great men whose works have been the delight, the instruction of succeeding ages; see with what cringing, fawning complacency they hung about the powerful men of their age; how they have bartered the lustre of genius and of virtue for the poor recompence of momentary popularity: read the letter of Bacon, after his fall, to his royal master; the name of Dryden flushes the cheek with indignation; Otway, with a most superior genius, sunk despicably low in the sordid sink of meanness and adulation; and Pope, though his writings breathe the very fire of independence, could become the most courtly little creature that ever haunted the tables of the great. Nor is this all. It appears, that not even the consciousness of talent and of worth united has been able to preserve them from the contamination of vulgar minds. Admitted to the company of their patrons, they have adopted the obsequious timidity of a servant; they

they have trembled, they have stammered, they have equivocated, and they have at last *lied*, rather than presume to tell a prince or an earl that he was in error. Oh, shame to manhood! What is there so awe-inspiring in a name, that it should tempt a man to shuffle meanly between truth and falsehood, and even if the former at length speak out, that it should clothe itself in the garb of fear; that it should be disguised with a thousand supplicatory expressions, to shew that you are conscious of your bold presumption in daring to contradict a man who is wrong? Blush ye, who have fed, thus, the pampered appetite of boundless pride. I could weep for your humiliation when I think it was accompanied with the high endowments of mental pre-eminence. Oh, man! reverence yourself! Abhor the foul delusion that blinds your native faculties; disdain to breathe a word, to glance a look, that does not

spring

spring pure and unspotted from the sanctioned consciousness of truth!

I do not expect entire approval of the general tenor of this chapter: particular exceptions will be natural to an active mind which thinks for itself. Unmingled approbation, indeed, could give me no delight; for I know too well the fallibility of human judgment to believe that perfection, in speculative matters, can ever be attained; and he who praises without any reservation, shews either that he has not read at all, or has read without power to discriminate. In the former it is an insult, in the latter a humiliation. Liberal censure does honour to him who gives and him who receives it, if he receive it temperately: and encomiums appear just, only when relieved by opposition. It may be easy to point out some particular expressions and ideas in the above remarks upon independence of character which may be thought

thought rather too enthusiastic; and, perhaps, such an accusation would be right, though upon the calmest consideration I know not how I could have written otherwise. Warmed with my subject, it is likely that I have wandered from that argumental precision which is necessary in establishing a truth; but then, though I may have asserted rather than reasoned, yet my point is no less gained if those assertions be irrefragable. Some subjects are treated best when made to appeal to our passions, and particularly such subjects as are connected with our social duties. A man is sooner impelled to virtue than reasoned into it: more effective morality is produced by splendid example, whether real or fictitious, than by all the demonstrative discourses that were ever penned. Were it my fate to ascend the scaffold with another, if I saw *him* meet the stroke with manly and impressive fortitude, I should be at once

once exalted to equal heroism; but to this pitch of intrepidity it would, perhaps, be vain to endeavour to raise me by books or by counsel. It is thus in a thousand instances. Caught by the contagion of example, or driven by the piercing sense of shame, the miser becomes generous, and the stern forgiving. Our moral duties, like the nitrous train, lie dull, or blaze together; communicate the spark to a single grain, it spreads to all the rest: sometimes, indeed, an impure particle intervenes, stops the circling flame, and leaves one half untouched. Few men are capable of that individual virtue which begins and ends in their own breasts; the majority lean on the sanction of their fellow-creatures. To such, example is the most powerful excitement; and, next to example, fervid and impassioned appeals to their feelings. I have sometimes seen, indeed, more striking effects from the

the latter than from the former; but this is rare. It always, however, holds a superior station over the torpid efficacy of dull reasoning, which shews us the way we ought to go, but seldom displays a motive why we should go. Too often it renders the path additionally intricate and repulsive, and hopes to make our victory more certain by making the contest more arduous. But, in this, it surely forgets that every man is not a hero; that to struggle, when we may remain quiet without immediate or perceptible injury, is the character of so small a proportion of mankind, as to render exception superfluous; and that a man will more certainly engage with ardour in a pursuit which promises a speedy and a prosperous issue, than in one that threatens perplexity, danger, and miscarriage. It is better to leave a man to his own native energies: as obstructions arise, the power arises to overcome them; in every

every case we ascend or fall with our situation; and when prescience can avail nothing, (as is almost always the case) I think, with the poet, that "ignorance is bliss."

CHAP. XI.

THERE are many beautiful and sequestered walks in the neighbourhood of my paternal estate, where it was my delight to ramble undisturbed, and brood over that change in life which was occasioned by my father's death. To me it was a pleasing solace, and I found more comfort from solitary meditation than from all the empty consolation of man. In the spring time of the year, when the whole creation round is just bursting into birth, it is impossible to describe what are my sensations. To walk abroad and see the hand of Nature busy at work, even in the humblest leaf that decks the way-side hedge; to mark the all-pervading green mantling the country round; to hear the birds trilling their morning and their evening lay to the rising or the setting sun; to see the husbandman at work, big with

the hopes of the coming year; to think how many thousands receive support through his labours; and how kindly the beneficent God of Heaven sends forth his showers and his sun-shine to nurture the young seed in the parent bosom of the earth; all this fills the breast with a sweet, a placid calm, which they only know who have felt it. With the spring, all the faculties seem to revive and expand; the heart glows more warmly; a spark of that gracious love and benevolence which are working all around animates it; the affections take a more ardent tone, and the soul opens to philanthropy and peace. How sweet it is to contemplate the promised plenty; to see the tender blade peeping forth its green head through the brown surface, inhaling the pure ether, and basking in the sun's enlivening rays! Oh! these objects, weighing upon the heart, teach us a religion grateful to the Almighty! They teach us an adoration pure, ardent, and

effective;

effective; they lead us to think of HIM who made us, through the works of his creation; they breathe into us the sublimest, and at the same time the most grateful, ideas of a provident and merciful God!

In the magnitude of his works, in their essences, in their relations which escape the most penetrating researches of man, we see his power; we feel that he is great and omnipotent, and that here we are only in the cradle of existence. In the effects of his love and kindness we view him as a mild, a merciful, a forgiving judge; we repose upon him as upon our father; we pour our sorrows forth into his ears, and feel relieved; we call upon him for assistance, and are confident. Every step we take reminds us of his omnipresence, and we feel that we are for ever beneath his eye. The hand that provides the nest for the sparrow and the lair for the tiger, the hand that has built its shelter even for the sorriest insect that partakes

partakes the vital beam, will not that hand gather *me* under its defence, and provide for my wants? Oh! my heart feels that it will be so, and comfort dwells within it. I cannot walk abroad, that I do not see the marks of his all providing goodness: the worm that creeps into the earth shews it to me, and the bird that wings it evening way to its nest; the domestic animals that seek their dwelling as the night approaches tell it to me: there is nothing in his creation so mean that I cannot draw this truth from it; and while I draw it, my heart swells with rapture and adoring piety towards the Giver! Oh, surely a rapture most grateful! a piety most acceptable! It is pure, glowing, and involuntary. Yes! *involuntary*, for there needs not will, at such a moment, to fill me with the conception. All the Deity rushes upon my soul, and imprints his image there never to be effaced! How much more elevated, how much more suitable

suitable to the grandeur of God, is such a homage than wandering, compulsory, and stated devotions, where the soul is hindered from expanding by the gloomy circle of walls, by the gaudy apparel of human beings, by the noise of multitudes, and by every thing which tends to place the petty works of *man* before our eyes rather than our Creator! The temple of God is the human heart; the vestibule is his creation. Who will have the most sublime conceptions of the Majesty of Heaven, and who will, consequently, feel the warmest glow of devotion,—he who takes his seat periodically at a stated hour within the walls of a church, surrounded by two or three hundred others, the majority of whom regard the meeting as a place in which to shew fine apparel and new fashions, listening perhaps to an execrable preacher, delivering a vile and senseless rhapsody, without warmth, without spirit, without any thing that can make it speak to the heart; or he,

who

who sees the Deity walking forth in grandeur and sublimity among his works; who hears him in the storm, and sees his hand in the red lightning; who marks his voice in the wind, and his steps in the waves of the ocean; who sees him as the Father of All in his providential care, and, *as* a father, worships him with unfeigned joy, humility, and gladness?

But, let every one provide for their own happiness after their own manner. That independence of thought which I claim for myself, I am bound, in justice and in reason, to accede to my brother and my sister. There are, who draw bliss from the fountain with all its impurities; and Heaven forbid I should endeavour to dash the cup from their hand.

Let me here, for it is analogous, unfold those feelings which have, at different times, taken possession of me; and upon the remembrance of which I now dwell

dwell, with a rapture more than holy. I do not suppose that they are peculiar to myself; but if we resolve to tell only what is unknown to all but ourselves, let no one presume to write. Thought, moulded by creative fancy, though without essential novelty, has power to please, and even to instruct with greater efficacy, according to the qualities by which it is recommended to the recipient. It is not likely that man should now discover, except in experimental philosophy (and even in that it has been supposed by some that all our discoveries are but resuscitations of what has been destroyed in the lapse of ages) what has not been before known: and the belief of this led Goldsmith to assert that whatever was new must be false; a maxim, which, to be true, must be received with several limitations.---I return, however, to myself.

Often, in a fine summer evening, have I sat and watched the declining sun, and

moralized it into a "thousand similies." Like the melancholy *Jaques* I found consolation in thus comparing inanimate nature to the moral world that was before me, and thus to vent my spleen upon the puppets whom I saw bustling up and down. When I have reclined upon the top of some high hill, and beheld the sun setting, cloudily, after a day in which he had walked his course through the heavens with dazzling splendour, I could parallel him with a declining monarch, whose age and kingdom both totter together, as, once, they both towered in meridian grandeur. As the dark and stormy clouds gather round the declining orb, obscure his rays, and seem, prematurely, to press him into night, so the enemies of kingly glory, those who kept aloof, trembling and awed during its height of power, now, that it is fast falling into the "yellow leaf," stretch forth their coward hands, pluck it from the stem to which it yet feebly clings; hurry it into

into oblivion, and then, like the Persian, turn to the rising sun, and adore its rays.

At other times softer and more ethereal images arise. When I have beheld distant clouds strongly tinged with the sun's rays, and floating, as it were, in the whiteness of surrounding æther, steadily I have fixed my eyes upon them, and imagined, that resting on their fluid borders, or rolled within their fleecy folds, angels sit hymning to the Great Creator; and, with heavenly voices, joined to the dulcet melody of harps, sing their vesper chorus. I fancy that the ærial strains reach my ears; and for a moment I am transported among them: then! heaven opens on my eyes! I see transparent forms, whose milk white wings fold, like a cincture, round their dazzling loins; they lean on golden harps; the blazing floor, spangled with stars innumerable, beams like a furnace; pendent, from vaulted roofs, hang starry lamps, burning sweet incense, "whose odours,

 wafted

wafted through the balmy air, fill the delighted sense with gladness. Angelic shapes glide through Doric columns inwreathed with many a spiral fold of flaming cressets, which, circling in magic dance around, reach a nameless height supporting roofs of fretted gold; these, as they move along, hold mutual discourse sweet, and look such dewy mildness from their eyes, as heavenly spirits wont when they, of old, descended to converse with man, swift messengers of God's eternal word: still, as my fancy works, methinks I'm led, to softly breathing measures from viewless harps by airy minstrels played, along the space of heaven; odorous perfumes from ten thousand fanning wings are wafted round me: trembling I stand, even at the throne of GOD himself, whence angels turn, with softened gaze, away, so bright the effulgent glory which irradiates from the clouds that dwell, for ever, round the Omnipotent! The lost soul is lapped in extacy, and big with unutterable

unutterable feelings: mysterious visions sweep before my sight; and, in an ocean plunged of pleasures, tempered to its state by the creative mind that formed them, it dies, dissolves away, and conscious only of amazing bliss. The shadows of approaching night recall its wandering thoughts, and I awake to life, to misery and the world!

Let me pause. Common minds will regard this as the ebullition of a disordered fancy; they will stigmatize it as the o'er stretched picture of imagination in which truth has no place. But there are those who will know how to appreciate, in others, what they often feel in themselves. They can conceive those emotions to have existed in my breast which I have attempted to describe, for, I solemnly aver, that in my life I have, a hundred times, experienced such sensations when I have beheld the setting sun from any sequestered spot, where the soul had power to form its conceptions,

and solitude, to indulge them in. Let no man try another by his own standard, but endeavour, impartially to consider what was the probable state of his feelings at the time whose conduct is to be estimated. It is the same with the exertions of an ardent fancy as with the calculations of a philosophical mind. In the latter case, it is a hazardous attempt to condemn the reasonings of another for want of apparent coherency or connexion. We are not masters of the internal conviction which accompanies a writer in his progress of delineating a series of argumentative positions, nor can we embrace the multifarious points of view which have probably been constantly present to him. That association of ideas, upon which many phenomena of mind are now explained, seems clearly to be the cause of this difficulty in appreciating, justly, the reasonings of an individual. If the predominating or leading idea which swayed that individual's mind at the

time

time of writing, and which awoke, by consequence, the subsequent train of reflections and arguments; if a similar predominant idea be not excited in our *own* minds in the outset; the consequence must infallibly be, that we shall view through a different medium, and try the opinions of another by a standard to which they were not originally adjusted. It is, as it were, assuming a false point of departure, by which we are liable to run upon shoals and quicksands from our ignorance of their situation, or mistaken in our approximation to them.

But, if this be true of those calm, intellectual pursuits, which constitute the researches of philosophy, how much more so is it of what springs solely from the imagination and from the combinations of an active and vigorous mind. In these, the flame must be caught with instantaneous sympathy, or it will appear only like an ineffectual glare, without heat and without effulgence. A man who

sits

sits down to a work of imagination, unless he bring to it a mind unfettered by prejudice, pliant in feeling, flexible in opinion, and above all, touched with an ethereal fineness that kindles with the slightest contact, sits down to a task from which he will rise disgusted: he will do no justice to the author he has read, nor will he improve his taste, but he will rather indurate its perceptions by having uselessly exercised them. There is a consonance of parts in the intellectual as well as in the moral and physical world. A man who should take up *Hudibras* while labouring under the melancholy produced by some domestic misfortune, would derive little pleasure from the perusal: he who should read Young's *Night Thoughts* when his heart was gay and lively, and his whole soul attuned to joy and festivity, would throw it aside as dully prolix and laboriously moral. Pictures require a certain position in which to be seen with advantage; the

the eye must take them in at a certain point; and it is the same with books. Every man is conscious with what different sensations he has read the same work at different times: the reason of this is not in the author, he has remained unchanged. He must look for it in the varying succession of those feelings, which, according as they predominate or not, influence the judgment. I once heard Milton characterised as a *queer* author, and the *Rape of the Lock* praised as a *funny poem!*

CHAP. XII.

It was a lovely morning, in the month of May, 1808, that we set forth upon our journey to the metropolis. If the gaiety of inanimate nature could inspire the human breast with gladness, I ought to have rejoiced at my departure: and, indeed, I could not help participating in the delightful sensations that were excited by a serene sky, a vernal sun, and gently fanning breezes that bore, upon their wings, all the dewy fragrance of the spring. I could not refrain from bidding adieu to every favourite spot as I passed it: and I cast many a sorrowing look back upon my flower garden, as if conscious that my rural work,

> "Among sweet dews and flowers; where any row
> Of fruit-trees over-woody reach'd too far
> Their pamper'd boughs and needed hands to check
> Fruitless embraces,"

must now devolve to others, and be, perhaps,

haps, wholly neglected. I confess, the thought was painful; for even a tree may gain a place in our affections, if we have long reared it and been accustomed to mark its growth, its blossoms in the spring, and its faded leaf in autumn. Without any pretensions to horticultural science, I feel an unfeigned delight in its pursuit, and believe it to be powerfully instrumental in awakening sentiments of piety and peace. Lord Bacon has observed that "a garden is the purest of human pleasures; it is the greatest refreshment to the spirits of man: without which buildings and palaces are but gross handy works:" and he exalts it to a high rank in the following comparison. "A man," says he, "shall ever see, that when ages grow to civility and elegancy, men come to build stately, sooner than to garden finely, as if gardening were the greater perfection."

The anticipation of untried pleasures, and the expectation of novelty, powerfully

fully subdue retrospective feelings of sorrow. We repose more willingly on assurances of bliss than upon the certainty of pain: and so many thoughts now occupied my mind, that it had little leisure for the recollection of its loss. My uncle proposed to visit the Lakes in our progress, and our course, therefore, was directed to Keswick. I can scarcely tell how it happened that it never suggested itself to my father to carry me thither, though living in the same county. It is a common reproach, indeed, that we neglect the treasures of nature and of art which lie at our feet, and undertake pilgrimages to visit those that are removed from us by intervening seas and countries. Since I have been in London, I have known more than one person, natives and residents of this city, who have never been within the walls of Westminster Abbey, or of St. Paul's Cathedral. Yet, they were of no ordinary character; and, probably, nay certainly, had either of these buildings been situated at York or Canterbury,

terbury, they would have undertaken journies to visit them. I knew a counsellor also, who had never been induced to enter the fine gothic fabric, that met his eyes and upbraided his taste, every time he entered Westminster Hall.

I cannot, however, impute it to want of taste that my father had neglected to let me behold the delightful scenery of the lakes, for I had often heard him expatiate upon the subject with an enthusiasm of delight. I am satisfied, however, that if he had any reason for the neglect, it was a valid one.

While we were at Keswick my uncle happened to meet with an intimate London acquaintance, who had resorted thither for the *fashionable purpose* of *seeing the lakes*. His name was Wilson: a man of independent fortune, and eminent among the gay and the dissipated. His exterior was not unpleasing, nor were his manners without that superficial amenity which is caught by habitual intercourse with

with well-bred and refined persons. His discourse was voluble, and it reminded me of the distich of the poet,

Words are like leaves, and where they most abound
Much fruit of sense beneath is rarely found.

If he were to be estimated by the facility which he talked upon every topic, he might be considered as a rival to the *admirable Crichton:* to him nothing was difficult. I was, at first, deceived by his fluency, into a belief of his vast acquirements: but, seizing a moment to examine the tenor of his discourse, I was soon convinced that

"Shallow streams run, dimpling, all the way."

In argument, he hoped to overcome every thing by a gracious smile, much gesticulation, and a constant application of *you may depend upon it,—I assure you —it's absolutely certain,—it's absurd to think otherwise,* &c. &c. If all these failed, he laughed; and if laughing failed, he strove to shield himself behind

a pompous

a pompous silence, undisturbed but by *aye* or *no*, and which seemed to imply that his opponent was wholly unworthy of serious refutation. It was not indeed often that he was induced to enter upon intricate discussions: his conversation consisted of short flights and sudden irruptions: but when wine had dispossessed prudence of her post, it was then that he exhibited himself in all the impotence of mind. At such moments I rather pitied than despised him.

Mr. Wilson was a member of the *associated coachmen*. He was one of those degenerate beings who place their renown in the dexterous management of four in hand: who prefer turning a sharp corner to any rational act; and who glory in their exaltation to a *dickie*, as much as a wise man would, in his exaltation to wisdom or to virtue. I need not add that his language was too often the language of the stable, deprived indeed of its grosser qualities, but preserving all its spirit. His dress was

so characteristic, so descriptive of the habits of the man, that when he first addressed my uncle, and I perceived them in friendly discourse together, a transient sense of humiliation and debasement crept across me, that a relative of mine should associate so familiarly with what I naturally judged him to be, a coachman. My embarrassment, indeed, was relieved by Sophia, and a mingled sentiment of contempt and indignation succeeded the feelings that were first excited.

It were vain to hope that admonition can reach those who have lost all self-respect. He who can descend to the acquirements of a coachman, will be content with a coachman's importance. He who has chosen the stable for his *palæstra*, can have no ambition beyond a groom. The man whose highest wishes centre in the accomplishments of a postilion, will look for his reward among those who can judge of his merits, and grooms, coachmen, and postilions will, therefore,

therefore, be his *arbitri elegantiarum*. Could we but teach the world to see with our own eyes, what great personages we should all be: and could these degenerate beings but transform England into one vast stable, and its inhabitants into *jockies*, their renown would then be illustrious and permanent: for, in a nation of blind people, a one-eyed man would be king. This, however, cannot be.

Shew me then a human creature more despicable than the members of the *Whip Club*. I could almost exclaim, in the indignant language of Shakspeare,

> Oh heaven, that such companions thou'dst unfold,
> And put in every honest hand a *whip*
> To lash the rascals naked thro' the world,
> Even from the east to the west!

Will it be said that this is intemperate language? No. It cannot. Who are they that constitute this worthless club? The titled and the opulent. And what *ought* to be their influence and example in society? A corrupt and profligate nobility is a nation's

tion's scourge. Private vices respect only the individual; but public ones, (I mean those that are committed under the public eye) communicate infection; they sap the foundations of the commonweal, and lead, in their train, anarchy, rebellion, and bloodshed. Can it be expected that a people should feel reverence for gamblers, jockies, and cockers? And if that reverence, which rests upon opinion, be annihilated, what other basis will you find, to support the present distinctions of society? Man, simply considered, is co-ordinate with man, and, in society, he is diversified only by wisdom, by virtue, by power, or by VICE. To our superiors in wisdom and in virtue we instinctively submit: but, our superiors in vice alone, we indignantly resist. Here then are the evils which are to be dreaded. The moral distinctions of society are shaking to their centre; they are crumbling into dust: and woe to the land that is purified by fire and blood.

In

In such a crisis, the innocent *may* fall: the guilty *must:* on their devoted heads the first tide of vengeance will flow, and it will sweep them to destruction.

It is lamentable to behold such unawed depravity. Public opinion has lost its wholesome power over the corrupt, and nothing is thought vile enough to be done in secret. We are taught to consider (and we must consider) our nobility as the hereditary legislators of the country: and we look up to the opulent as our delegated ones. Where then is our safety, if the senate is exchanged for the stable? If the toils of state are bartered for the sordid honours of a jockey? While such events are taking place, what must be the silent progress of opinion?

I do not address myself to individuals. I should be indifferent to the circumstance of thirty or a hundred men, for whom their forefathers have acquired wealth and titles, ascending the coach-box. It may be their proper place: it

certainly *is* their proper place, for they give proof of its propriety in their choice. I could behold them there, as I have beheld them, with pity and contempt, and I could easily persuade myself that they perform a public good by keeping away from the senate, and by abstaining from all connexion with public transactions. I could, cheerfully, consign them to the ignoble post they had chosen, and thank heaven that he had gifted so many of his creatures with so perfect a knowledge of themselves and their powers. I should account it a blessing that so much folly and so much meanness had selected so adequate a course. But I look farther. I look to the influence which these things have upon men's opinion. I look to the contagion of example: I look to what must be the condition of a nation when its rulers are sunk in the pursuit of sordid pleasures, and when they have destroyed, by their profligacy, the reverence, and with the reverence, the obedience of the people.

people. History will teach us wisdom, here, by example; and if we unfold its volumes, we shall find that empires and states have fallen, and will fall, by the enervating influence of degeneracy, corruption, and luxury; and this degeneracy, this corruption, this luxury, have been generated, not among the people, emphatically so called, but among their rulers: it is there that they have taken root, budded, and expanded, and from them they have silently and gradually descended, till the whole commonweal has become rotten. These are truths that cannot be refuted. Let me not, then, be accused of exaggerating dangers, or exciting needless alarm. The evil may be distant, but have we not cause to tremble, if it be begun? If a man were told, and if he knew the prediction to be certain, that his house would one day fall upon him and crush him, by the silent undermining of rats, would he not be vigilant to prevent a single

single rat from sheltering in its foundation?

Perhaps, what I have written may be stigmatized as the vehemence of folly. If it be folly, it is, at least, in a good cause. If I anticipate what can never happen; if I imagine corruption that does not exist; if I foresee consequences that cannot ensue, I shall rejoice in a conviction of my error, and thank him that produces it. But, if *these things are:* and if the eternal course of events proclaims what *must* be the result of these things: I shall surely be pardoned, if, from an anxiety that is natural and honourable to me, I have enlarged the peril, or aggravated the causes. The precision of truth may, sometimes, be laid aside, when its existence is real. If we can alarm men from their vices by magnifying their danger, who shall condemn the process?

CHAP. XIII.

In the afternon Mr. Wilson dined with us. Before he arrived my uncle took an opportunity of delineating his character to us, nearly such as it is already before the reader. I perceived that he did not mention any quality in him that could be considered as praiseworthy; and I could not help expressing my surprise that he should permit a connexion which seemed to be productive of so little advantage.

"I think," said I, "were I to find, in my intercourse with a person, that there was nothing in his character qualified to excite my esteem or even my approbation, I should endeavour to relieve myself from the connexion."

"You ought to do so," added Sophia.

"I do not know," replied my uncle, "whether we ought to do so. Society subsists

subsists by mutual concessions. If a man resolves to associate with none but the wise and good, he will probably live in solitude. And, indeed, such a resolution would presuppose a considerable share of vanity in him that made it; for he must imagine that the wise and good would commune only with persons like themselves. No, In society we must receive man as he presents himself. We are at liberty, and we are bound, indeed, to avoid the fellowship of the truly profligate and the notoriously wicked."

"I am not speaking," I replied, "of that obvious duty which bids us shun the intercourse of the bad. *That* every one must do who hopes to enjoy the countenance of the good. But I allude to those connections which have nothing in them sufficiently attractive to excite our sympathy or esteem; and above all, when an individual happens to follow pursuits that we, ourselves, would not

indulge

indulge in from a conviction of their futility, or their meanness. In these cases, the disparity of inclination must be destructive of the great link of individual association: and where there is no pleasure nor profit, I cannot see why there should be connexion."

"You are like all theorists," said my uncle. "You proclaim loudly what ought to be done in particular circumstances, and you are confident in what *would* be your own procedure in those circumstances. Let me wait and see what you *are*."

"Of this I am assured," I replied, "that I will never sacrifice my judgment to any fallacious dictates of custom or prejudice. In the distribution of my time I shall always regard its application. Such was my departed father's counsel, and such shall be my practice. Of that, which is every one's moral estate, I shall be parsimoniously careful: and I hope to expend it in such a manner, that when I reflect

upon

upon its disbursement; I may feel also the utility or the delight that it has produced."

We now heard Mr. Wilson in the yard of the inn, contending with the hostler about a horse that was to run against time: and though I was too unlearned to enter into the merits of their discourse, I could perceive that the hostler had the best of the argument, and Mr. Wilson, quitting him with an oath, pronounced him an "ignorant blockhead," to which his antagonist replied that he was "knowing enough to cut him up."

While we were at dinner, it was a natural topic of conversation to expatiate upon the beautiful scenery with which we were surrounded. I was curious to observe what effect it could possibly have upon a mind like that of our guest. My uncle began by praising the placid beauty of Derwent water.

"It's immensely beautiful," said Mr. Wilson,

Wilson, "and what a strange thing that echo is at the end of it. My boatman had a monstrous loud voice, and he positively made the hills ring again."

"The lofty Skiddaw," replied my uncle, "rising in sullen grandeur on its margin, (as it were) forms a picturesque contrast to the cultivation that displays itself along the banks."

"Talking of mountains," answered Mr. Wilson, "what do you think of that strange piece of one that has tumbled down in Borrowdale, and looks like the keel of a ship? The old woman who shews this, asked me to shake hands with her under it, and I gave her fingers a fine squeeze."

"You are a man of gallantry," said my uncle in a cold, ironical tone, evidently disgusted with the flippancy of Mr. Wilson. He did not, however, feel the irony, but received the assertion and seemed flattered by the distinction. I ventured to observe to him that, having always lived

lived in London, he probably had no relish for rural beauty.

"Oh Miss," said he with a simper, "I am vastly fond of the country. I think it quite charming to walk in the fields; and when I am in town, I never omit to ride in the Park on a Sunday. Two or three of us make it a point to exhibit ourselves in *Rotten Row*."

By this emphatic *us* I supposed he meant his brother coachmen.

"You have a strange notion of rural beauty," replied my uncle, "if you go to seek it in Hyde Park."

"Why as to that," rejoined Mr. Wilson, "trees are trees every where: and then, in Hyde Park you have a beautiful piece of water, and, besides that, you have company, which, in my opinion, is necessary to make any thing delightful. I should feel no pleasure in driving between two hedges with nobody to look at me."

"Well," added my uncle, "though, as you

you observe, trees are trees every where, yet you'll allow that trees may derive beauty from position. Pictures are pictures every where, but pictures may receive accidental embellishment from local circumstance. Besides, in Hyde Park, which seems to be your *rus in urbe*, you have neither hills nor vallies, which are an essential adjunct to a landscape."

"There's the *Mount* in Kensington Gardens," replied Mr. Wilson, with seeming satisfaction.

I was ignorant what were the claims of this *Mount* to the name of a mountain, but from the smiles of my uncle and Sophia, I guessed that it was very unluckily brought forward; and I need not inform the reader that, when I visited Kensington Gardens, after my arrival in London, and beheld this rival of Skiddaw and Plinlimmon, I thought of the metropolitan exultation of Mr. Wilson.

My uncle was soon convinced that little was to be expected from his guest

on

on topics of pastoral grace, and he therefore turned the discourse into that channel which might afford him an opportunity of *exhibiting* himself. It is beyond my power to pourtray the eloquence with which he harangued upon horses, the management of the whip, squaring of elbows, races, and jockies. Here he was "himself again," and he only wanted fit audience to shine with undiminished lustre. He spoke familiarly of lords and dukes, his rivals or compeers; and his discourse fully taught me that *they* were *his* companions, because *he* only was fit to be *theirs*. I sat and heard him, sometimes with scorn and sometimes with pity; and as often as he addressed himself to me, when urging some important point, I evaded a reply, that I might not, by the warmth of my feelings, be led to transgress the bounds of decorum. As soon as it was fit, Sophia and myself quitted a conversation that possessed so little interest.

When

When they joined us at the tea table, Mr. Wilson had less discretion, for he had more wine; and, as I have already observed, he engaged, at such times, without any caution, in the discussion of topics to which he was inadequate. Where there is little knowledge there is, usually much presumption. A man of few ideas supplies his deficiency with a boldness of assertion, which is so remote from true wisdom, that it may be received almost as an axiom, that they who know the most speak with the greatest diffidence. The poet has truly observed that

"A little knowledge is a dangerous thing."

It is dangerous, not only to society, but to the individual: and even when it cannot be considered as incurring peril, it is always offensive unless united with humility.

I was fully sensible of this during the discourse, or rather logomachy, between my uncle and Mr. Wilson. The latter, as

as if to compensate for the inanity of his observations at the dinner table, resolved now to pour forth his thoughts with a liberal hand. He was turbulently communicative; and he was in full possession of the happy art of preserving his self-confidence, by never attending to any objections that were made to his positions. He spoke, permitted a reply, spoke again, but without the smallest reference to the reply that had been made. At that time, this mode of argument was new, and I thought it not far from insolent. But I have since observed many who adopt it, and I regard it now as contemptible. I will only add that I felt inexpressibly relieved when he arose to depart, and from that time it has never been my misfortune to sit in his company: for, though he visited my uncle while we remained at Keswick, I and my cousin studiously avoided his presence.

After he was gone, my uncle saw, or fancied he saw, an unusual gravity in my manner.

manner. He attempted to rally me upon it, as if it arose from the absence of Mr. Wilson, and he informed me, with mimic condolence, that his hand was engaged to a rich and beautiful girl, the daughter of a popular Earl, and a distinguished member of the *whip club.* "Wilson," continued he, "first attracted his lordship's esteem by turning into a stable yard four in hand, at full speed: emulative, I suppose, of Olympic renown.

Metaque fervidis evitata rotis.

"How I pity her!" I exclaimed, "if she be a girl possessing any energies of mind or any sensibility of heart. Married to Mr. Wilson! It is impossible it can be her own choice, if she have understanding to choose; and if she acts from parental authority, my heart bleeds for her. Believe me, I would sooner link myself to an industrious mechanic, who feels, thinks, and acts consistently with his station, than to a man like Mr. Wil-

son.

son, who disgraces his birth, his rank, and his fortune. The wife of such a man, must be constrained to find happiness in the transactions of a stable, the pedigree of a race-horse, or the pages of a New-market Calendar; for I would ask, in the language of Milton,

> Among unequals what society
> Can sort, what harmony or true delight?
> Of fellowship I speak to participate
> All rational enjoyment,

CHAP. XIV.

Our stay at Keswick was not intended to be long, as my uncle was impatient to join his family, from whom he had been longer absent than he would have been from any other cause than the melancholy one which had occurred. Sophia often spoke with tenderness of her absent brothers and sisters, and anticipated the delights that awaited her when they should meet again. These, alas! were delights which I knew not; but I was fully sensible that they must be among the most exalted and intense pleasures of our nature.

I will not, however, omit to mention, that while at Keswick we passed over to Buttermere, and visited, of course, the dwelling of *Mary*'s father. We breakfasted and dined at his house, for it is the only one there of public reception.

We took a guide from Keswick, who, besides securing us from being lost among the mountains, takes care to point out every *curosity* as we proceed along. He was a very communicative little gentleman; and under his guidance we saw of course all that was to be seen. I shall not fill my pages with a description of scenery, that may be found, *usque ad nauseam*, in the pages of yearly tourists. That it is grand and beautiful; that it affects the mind with a sensation at once placid and awful; that a kindred spirit might love to wander among these mountains and vallies, or repose by the side of the translucent streams that water their margins; these are things which are known already, and I shall abstain from presenting them again to public attention, dressed up, perhaps, in a new fashion, and strutting beneath a cumbrous load of flowery declamation. Suffice it therefore to say, that we left Keswick early in the morning, on horseback, and enjoyed every possible

possible delight from the contemplation of scenery, which ignorance itself cannot behold without feeling a new spirit move within him. The approach towards Buttermere is truly picturesque; a village, consisting of about a dozen houses, and a rude parish church in the midst of them, surrounded by lofty mountains and a beautiful piece of water calmly reflecting their towering summits. *Mary* received us at the door. When we entered, I found a book lying open upon the table, which she had been reading: it was *Sturm's Reflections.* I entered into conversation with her upon this work, and some other topics: her answers were given with the reserve of those who know little, but who cautiously abstain from betraying their ignorance, by talking discreetly. My readers, I dare say, have often met with those kind of people whom we cannot call fools from any positive evidence, but whom we surmise to be little less because they have not appeared more. I

discoursed

discoursed about the beauties of the situation. She simply answered in the affirmative, without venturing to the extent of one original remark. She has a small collection of books, that have been presented to her by different persons, when they were visiting the Lakes: and most of the donors have, ostentatiously, scribbled their own names on the blank leaf or the title page. My uncle's ungallant nature prevented him from anticipating any thing of this kind; and his name will remain therefore unrecorded among her benefactors.

Her figure is pretty, and she has fine dark eyes; but I looked in vain for any thing that I would call beauty. She is a brunette in complexion: her hair was turned up behind, and fastened with a comb that had a pearl back, or perhaps only beads; for I did not accurately examine. I am told that she used to wear her hair flowing loosely over her shoulders, which added a sort of interest to her appearance,

appearance, and which, combined with local circumstances, naturally suggested the idea of a wild mountain girl. She has now a very matronly and staid look and demeanor; and were she transplanted to an English inn she would scarcely acquire the appellation of a *pretty bar maid.* Her misfortune has, in effect, made her fortune; it exalted her to a temporary celebrity, and she reaped a golden harvest. Her case was common: but some accidental circumstances occurred to make it interesting: she was pitied, consoled and relieved, while fiction held the pen of truth.

Our setting forth was gay, but our return was dreary. Towards noon the sky began to lower, the clouds gathered fast, and every thing threatened an approaching storm. It did not threaten in vain. For a few hours it was only a drizzling mist; and as we were not without hopes that it might subside we resolved to dine where we were. Nature,

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in her weeds, is often not less lovely than in her brighter apparel. I found an added beauty in the mountains, their sides enveloped in a grey mist, through which the white foam of several waterfalls, increased by the rains, dashed incessantly; in the general gloom spread over the face of things, and the awful silence all around; and in the black clouds, driving along the sky, and sometimes settling on the highest peaks of the surrounding mountains. I could not remain within doors, and spite of the wind and rain, and mire, I enjoyed a solitary ramble. I felt more exalted, a sentiment infinitely more grand, a prouder consciousness of existence, thus alone in a moment of such solemn dreariness than could have been inspired by the noblest scenery this earth produces, gilded with the rays of the sun, and smiling, as it were, beneath the garish influence of a clear azure sky. Even in the suburbs of London, with only one green field before my eyes, looking from

from my chamber window, I feel a sweet and solemn emotion, a sort of sympathy with sorrowing nature at the closing in of a November evening, with rain and fog, and wind, and all their dreary, cheerless desolation. In spring and summer, a landscape animates me with a jocund feeling; every thing around me wears a gay appearance, and I sympathize with it; but this feeling leaves no relish; it has a pleasing insipidity while it lasts, but it produces no effect which extends beyond the immediate operation of the cause. On the contrary, the contemplation of nature stripped of all her gawdy colours, and cloathed in one uniform tint, does not distract the mind by a variety of sensations, but generates one, single, pensive, solemn feeling, so accordant with our general tone of mind, that we cherish its presence by indulgence.

After I had rambled about for a short time, the increasing rain compelled me to take shelter. I returned, and dinner

was

was ready to bestow substantial comfort. With the closing in of the evening the storm became more violent. What was to be done? There were powerful reasons why we should return to Keswick that night: we had waited, in the hopes of fine weather, till day-light had forsaken us, and now we had to encounter darkness and storm. Want of resolution to endure single evils, often compels us to undergo the infliction of united ones. Our situation, to be sure, was not quite poetical nor romantic, for we had neither lightning, nor thunder, nor wind: but we had such a torrent of rain as I had never witnessed before.

We remained, however, in all the peevishness of expectation, receiving advices from our guide every five minutes as to the state of the weather; and when, at last, there was no reasonable hope that the rain would abate time enough to render it beneficial to us, we resolved to proceed through it, and our horses were accordingly

accordingly brought. Sophia was equipped in a large great coat, and a slouched beaver hat of Mary's father: and, for myself, Mary kindly accommodated me with a Scotch-plaid cloak. Vain precaution! I had not ridden a hundred yards from the door ere I felt the rain gently distilling through every part of my cloaths. Positive evils are always borne with more fortitude than those that we hope may be mitigated: when we perceive no prospect of redress, there is an instinctive acquiescence which supplies the place of patience.

Our situation was sufficiently dismal, and I believe perilous, but the impenetrable darkness of the night precluded us from ascertaining the extent of our danger. The road sometimes lay along the ridge of hills, sometimes descending, and sometimes ascending: the guide went first, and to the fidelity of his local knowledge we committed ourselves. We rode along in sullen silence; and my own

own thoughts were often turned upon the ludicrous appearance we should exhibit, could a sudden irradiation of light discover us to each other.

In one part of the road, the descent was so steep, that our guide advised us to dismount. I did this unwillingly, for encumbered as I was with my cloak, dripping with rain, and besides, no expert rider, I had some doubts about the celerity of my re-mounting, and my doubts were not fallacious; for the wet had imparted a degree of lubricity to the saddle, and when I attempted to remount I was very near a precipitate descent on the other side. My horse, however, was an animal of compassion, and he waited patiently till his unskilful mistress had fairly mounted him. But, by the time I had accomplished this feat, my companions were totally out of hearing; and now, I confess, no very comfortable presage came across my mind. I listened, but in vain: and the gloomy apprehension

of

of wandering among the hills, all night, or probably breaking my neck down a precipice, soon took possession of me. My horse seemed impatient to proceed, and I gave him the rein, committing myself entirely to his guidance. The intelligent animal regained, in a few minutes, my companions, though there were two turnings from the straight road. This was the only episodical evil that befel me.

There was something, however, grand in our situation: but it was the grandeur of obscurity. There was room for the imagination to act, and her combinations require but a small basis of reality on which to erect their fabric. I was much struck, as we crossed a small wooden bridge, at hearing a loud din of waters rushing beneath our feet, and seeing the white foam as it broke upon the darkness of the night. The tremendous thought, that the accident of a rotten plank, might plunge me down; that I might be dashed on some jutting rock, or lacerated, by casual

casual contracts from eminence to eminence, till I sunk beneath the waters that roared below, occurred to me, but modified by a pleasing sense and hope of my security.

It will, perhaps, be thought that this is a very pompous account of a very trivial event: for I was neither precipitated into gulphs, nor lost among unknown passes; but reached Keswick about ten o'clock at night, without any other corporeal hurt than a bruised foot, for which I was indebted to my own awkwardness in riding through a gate.

Wet and dreary we arrived at our inn, and language cannot, adequately, describe the ludicrous appearance which we presented, when the servants appeared, with lights, to help us to dismount. It was impossible not to smile at a calamity which, now that it was passed, left no other traces behind it than such risible ones.

With regard to myself, however, the effects

effects did not stop here. I was seized, the next day, with an inflammation on my lungs, which confined me to my room for some time; and when, at last, we were enabled to proceed, I continued to pass my nights in great restlessness, being seldom able to sleep in a recumbent posture. Happily, however, this did not continue long, and I was, gradually, restored to my former state of health.

During one of these nights an event occurred, which had so powerful an effect upon me, at the time, that I cannot forbear to relate it.

While we were at Keswick, I saw and heard, for the first time, an Æolus's harp. Its name, and its imagined perfections, were familiar to me, from the description of Thomson, in his *Castle of Indolence*, and, as I listened to its tones, I repeated, with enthusiasm, the following stanza:

Ah me! what hand can touch the strings so fine?
Who, up the lofty diapason roll

Such

Such sweet, such sad, such solemn airs divine,
Then let them down again into the soul?
Now rising love they fann'd; now pleasing dole
They breath'd, in tender musings thro' the heart;
And now a graver, sacred strain they stole,
As when seraphic hands a hymn impart;
Wild warbling nature all, above the reach of art!

But I was not content with the temporary pleasure of accident. I longed to possess the treasure, and I accordingly purchased one

I could not but lament, however, that my delight in it was dependent upon the winds, and it happened that during the remainder of our stay at Keswick, I was deprived of the pleasure of listening to its magic minstrelsy.

From Keswick our progression was to the Windermere Lake, on the margin of which we took up our abode for a few days. My chamber window opened to this beautiful expanse of water and its circumjacent scenery. Here, after a sleepless and a painful night, I have watched

for

for the first grey of the morning, and listened to the feathered choristers as they sang their matin chorus. I have eagerly inhaled the fresh breeze of the new-born day, and my eyes have wandered over the distant landscape, and watched its different beauties, as they have gradually become more and more visible. I have been comforted, as I heard the stillness of the morning disturbed by awakening man, to think that another night of solitary sickness was passed, and that I should again be surrounded by active human beings. This is a delight which they only know who are doomed to waste the hours of repose in watchful wretchedness.

The calmness of the weather had, hitherto, prevented me from using my harp: but, on the last evening of our stay at Windermere Lake, a gentle breeze arose and I placed it in the window. It was not, however, sufficient to give motion to the strings. I left it there; and,

exhausted from want of rest, I fell into a slumber. While sleeping, the wind arose. The harp gave forth its loudest tones, and I awoke. Shall I ever forget the feelings of that moment? I had forgotten that it was there. I listened: I was awe-struck. It was night. I thought I heard angelic voices in the midnight air. The tender, melancholy tones, now swelling, now decaying, as the fitful breeze swept across the strings, had something so soft, so unearthly in them, that my mind, lost in a momentary, solemn extacy, fancied some angel, roving from her sphere, had wandered nearer earth, and sang celestial harmony. At other times, when all the chords, in full and various diapason, breathed their wild melody, it seemed as if the glorious minstrelsy of heaven, wafted on the rapid winds, descended to the ears of mortal man. Then I thought of all that poets tell, and the heart half credits, how angels sing around a parting soul,

soul, and bear it to its heavenly father, amid strains of joy and songs of triumph. I remained in awful stillness; the moon shone, with silver radiance, through my window: the wind sighed among the rustling leaves; the waters of the lake dashed, with sullen pauses, on the shore: a death-like silence prevailed. Oh! at that moment I was scarcely human. I sat and listened, till my mind soared on the wings of rapt enthusiasm, and quitted this earthly scene, and mingled with celestial essences. I forgot all care, all sorrow, all disease: I longed for dissolution: I longed to be with those from whom, I thought, such heavenly harpings came.

It will not be wondered at, that when, at length, the tumult of my feelings had subsided and left me to my calmer reason, I was unable to endure the continuance of these sounds, though I then knew their cause. The effect was so powerful

 that

that I afterwards thought of it with terror, and I hastily removed the harp from its situation. Doubtless, much of the sensation which I experienced, was to be attributed to my situation, and to the state of my health: yet, I believe, no one could have been so awakened, and at such an hour, and ignorant of the cause, without feeling a more than common emotion.

Since, however, I have been placidly delighted with it. What a soothing tenderness of tone it produces! How easy it is to imagine it somewhat more than earthly, and to listen to its strains with all the credulity of superstition. Sometimes I can fancy that I behold the solemn pacing cavalcade chanting a funereal dirge to the obsequies of a departed saint: or, some lowly virgin, bending before the sacred shrine, and offering up her vesper orison with a hallowed voice of such ravishing sweetness, as might

"Create a soul under the ribs of death."

I can

I can lie entranced thus, in shadowy dreams, and form such a fairy region round me, that the very blessed might envy me the transports which I feel. I am disengaged from the world and all its anxieties. I am calm and tranquil; I hear nothing, I see nothing, distinctly: I feel seraphic pleasures: but, alas! they are momentary: they are fragile: they depend upon the winds.

Before I wrote this, I should, perhaps, have asked myself, have my readers ever heard an Æolus's harp? If they have not, surely my rapture will appear extravagant, if not ridiculous. Nay, if they even have heard it, there is a possibility it may not have affected them as it does me: and then, I shall appear still worse; for I have, already, heard it called a *pretty music*. But, *de gustibus*, &c. I certainly would not quarrel with a person who should feel no pleasure from hearing the tones of an Æolus's harp, but

but I should doubt, very much, the susceptibility of his character; as I should his who laid down Milton with indifference.

CHAP. XV.

In proceeding to the metropolis we passed through Lancaster, as my uncle wished to pay a visit to Sir Frederick Congreve, who has an estate not far from there. Of the topography of this place, I shall say not much. We visited the Castle, and I had the felicity of sitting in *John of Gaunt's* chair, and as I sat there, many a thought of past times, of our Edwards and Bolingbrokes came across my mind. The prison of this town deserves particular commendation. It is established upon an excellent foundation, and is, I believe, a practical illustration, as far as possible, of the ideas of Howard. It seems to afford every opportunity for reformation during confinement, and to provide against that canker of the mind, idleness. Various modes of employment are instituted for the confined; and, as far

far as it is consistent with justice, there are suitable rewards for correct and moral behaviour. As little room as is possible, is left for the operation of inactivity; for, it is wisely considered, that he who has become vicious from indolence, will scarcely reform from the same cause. But, by gradually generating in the minds of criminals a love and relish of industry, we provide them with the best security against the influx of vice when they are again, sent forth into society. Pleasure, under some modification or other, is every one's object through life; and pleasure, when attained produces contentment. He therefore, who has learned to find pleasure in industry, and feels content from the exercise of it, is, at once, deprived of that restlessness of mind which mere vacancy produces and which leads to crimes. It is, therefore, much to be wished that in every internal regulation of a prison the first attention should be directed to a proper employment

ment of the time of those that are confined; for, it is the surest corrective of present wickedness and the most effectual safeguard against future depravity.

My uncle was disappointed in not finding his friend at home. He had left Lancashire only the day before, for Edinburgh, and from thence he meant to return to London. We continued, therefore, our journey, with an intention of admitting no more delays. I do not mean to enumerate what towns we passed through, nor how many miles they are apart from each other. Nothing is more irksome than verbose descriptions of places; telling how many streets they contain, which way they run, with what stone they are paved, how many churches and what is the height of their steeples. Were I to travel round the habitable globe, these are the first things I should forget to remember.

I was expressing this opinion to my uncle one day as we were travelling along,

along, and I mentioned how futile, sometimes, the observations of tourists were: "made" continued I, "evidently to add bulk to the volume, or because they could do no better."

"Were I to travel," said my uncle, "my object would be to study man, and not the proud edifices which his vanity has erected to hold, too often, a worthless being, and to cover, with its gaudy glare, the vices of its owner."

"I have often marked with indignation" I replied, "the childish precision with which travellers into the most interesting portions of the globe with regard to its moral aspect, have treasured up facts, which can be interesting only to him who has noted them, or to one who can follow his steps and determine them with his own eyes. Pages are filled to decide that, which, when decided, leaves the mind of the reader as vacant as before; zeal lights her torch to refute the idle hypotheses of fancy, and sits down contented

tented and exulting when she has shewn that here the land has gained upon the sea, and there, the sea has gained upon the land: that crossing this river at this place they were only two minutes, and, that if Mr. *Such-a-one* was two minutes and a half, he must have crossed it somewhat higher up. Laborious research lavishes the precious hours of life in endeavouring to illuminate that which is doomed to remain in perpetual obscurity; and, when it has arranged the same data in a new order, triumphs, and wonders by what fatality the world never discovered it before. Such 'laboured nothings' are contemptible."

"But" replied my uncle, "it requires less of mind to write a diary of places and distances, of mountains and rivers, towns and villages, and to rake up the dust and rubbish of antiquity, than to carry the spirit of investigation into the forms of existence, and their ever-varying colours: the former are still life and wait inspection;

inspection; but the latter, require to be seized with a happy dexterity and a native acumen, which few possess. For my own part, I estimate, as of subordinate importance, every thing in travels which does not relate to *man* under some one or other of his modifications. I care, little, for the direction of mountains and the rapidity of rivers; I am indifferent as to what winds prevail, or how high or how low the thermometer may be: these fill the head, but they leave the heart vacant. I know that these are esteemed, by many, as important topics of investigation; I know also, that in some respects they *are* important, and a traveller is read with avidity who determines the height of an elevation or the breadth of a lake. I do not wish to degrade them from their rank."

"Perhaps indeed," replied Sophia, "we ought to suspect ourselves of error when we can find no charms in that which delights mankind in general."

"Why, yes," I added, "when the concurrent opinion of the million runs counter

counter to the notions of an individual, it is a more liberal and a more modest presumption, that the world is right, and that he is wrong. But, though we may believe ourselves to be in error, we ought not to renounce what *may be* error without the solemn conviction of our minds. This," continued I, turning to my uncle, "was a lesson constantly inculcated to me by my dear father, and I was instructed to become the architect of my own opinions. Those opinions, though often erroneous, and though rashly formed, I was never called upon to renounce with an unconvinced judgement. And, by this rule, shall all my future life be guided. "Mistake me not," added I, smiling, "for an obstinate, self-willed heretic. I am open to reason; and, when any one shews me, by a calm and deliberate process of ratiocination, that a present notion is really wrong; and, when I feel my mind assent to the force and truth of the arguments used, then, I

would

would as easily discard that notion as I would divest myself of a garment. More I cannot do: more, no one ought to do. It is servile humility (unless a radical defect of mind renders us incapable of resolving independently) to pin our faith down upon the *ipse dixit* of another; to receive opinions without examination, and to maintain them without conviction."

"In such a case" replied my uncle, "the very reasons which a man might use in support of his opinion would not be his own but those of his master; consequently, he must be a mere vane that moves at the mercy of the winds."

"Exactly so" I answered. "No, let us be answerable for our *own* sins. Whether we reap the reward of virtue, or whether we smart beneath the punishment of vice, let us feel the noble consciousness that our smiles or tears flow from ourselves, and, that no foreign hand has laid the compost on whence they spring.

spring. In the former event, the heart denies its own gladness when mixed with the galling recollection that the garland we wear ought to deck another's brow: and we tremble, lest the despoiled sufferer should claim his right. In the latter, indignation swells the breast, to reflect that opprobrium points her finger at us for those errors which we have inherited from another: that we wear the badge of infamy, the insignia of disgrace for another; while shame forbids us to disclose our humiliation lest insult and mockery pursue the coward whose soul was so debased that it assumed the shameful livery of vice, without even the poor palliative of having acted from its own suggestions. Independence of thought is the first spring of virtuous action: and he, who has it not passes undistinguished among the crowd, a negative being loved nor hated, esteemed nor feared by any. Nor, is he to be trusted in any important event; for, on his re-

solves

solves no reliance is to be placed. To day, he is the machine of this man; to-morrow of another; wound up at will; and the most dextrous artist generally succeeds best in applying his energies. Even while I draw the character, I feel a sentiment of indignation take possession of me. It is recorded of Cyrus the younger, that he took a pride in shewing to Lysander the Lacedemonian, who visited him at Sardis, the trees which he had planted, and the walks which he had laid out: a striking contrast to his usual occupations. Even so, may it be my boast, that I have reared the plants of my own mind: and, though by unskilful management I have suffered weeds to creep in among those of better growth, yet, who will not envy me if I can say, 'This is the labour of 'my own hands: here I planted, and 'here I watered; here I watched the 'tender blossom unfolding its beauties, 'and there the sturdy tree hardening into 'strength; here I fenced the sprouting 'scion

'scion that it might flourish undisturbed,
'and here I twined the creeping tendrils
'that mutually supported each other:
'here, I rooted up the weed that gave,
'nor ornament nor use.' And if I *can* do all this, how ought I to revere the memory of my father to whom I owe the power."

I perceived that my uncle and Sophia were smiling at the warmth with which I had delivered myself, and after a moment's pause, Sir James replied, "What a difficult task it is, my niece, when we begin talking of ourselves to talk moderately. Your enthusiasm has been nourished in its parent soil of solitude, and as your opinions have never been brought into contact with the actual prejudices and customs of society, they have, to you, all the importance of principles. Nay: I do not deny that they ought to have; and, if wishing could effect it, I should rejoice to behold such a state of things

as would permit to you the full exercise of your peculiar notions."

"My cousin," said Sophia archly, "will certainly be the founder of another *Bas Bleu* society at which she will preside with the authority of a dictator."

"Perhaps, said I," with a little resentment, "I ought to establish an *Autological Club* in which, all should have the liberty of *praising* themselves. It may be, that I am better fitted to preside over such a society."

"Nay," replied my uncle, "you must not be offended at the sincerity of my language. I did not mean to condemn the warmth with which you spoke of yourself, for I think it laudable: it shews, at least, a consciousness of what ought to be done, and bespeaks a mind prepared to accomplish it to the utmost. I always look upon egotism, in virtuous resolutions, as a sign of a generous and good soil in which those resolutions are

likely

likely to flourish. But come: let us drop the subject, and revert to what preceded it, in which I do entirely coincide with you."

I smiled at this benevolent effort to remove the transient displeasure from my mind, which had arisen, too hastily, perhaps, and I added, that the opinion which I had expressed with regard to travels was one that I had always maintained, since I possessed the power of thinking: though I know not, I continued, looking significantly at my uncle, whether you will consider it as a *weed* or a *flower*. "Man," added I, "as he is modified by climate, customs, manners, laws, and institutions, is the noblest, and the only adequate object of human contemplation. It is a picture which, in all its lights and shades, preserves a powerful hold over our affections. Who is there that does not love to trace the operations of the human intellect under all those pre-disposing circumstances?

To observe, that where virtue, truth, and liberty erect their standard, there arts, science, knowledge, polished life, ascend, in gradual progress, to their highest; that where superstition unfurls her bloody flag, there nations crouch beneath self-created terrors, and seek to propitiate a ruthless deity by horrid rites. Here, to behold the mild spirit of christianity, like a fond mother, gathering her offspring in her arms, and teaching them how they may be blessed: there, the iron rod of despotism reared o'er a prostrate kingdom, and man's godlike image sunk in the sordid gulph of baseness and humility: one bloated being, mad with power, and swelled with insolence, issuing forth his bloody mandates, while thousands of his fellow creatures, men, with forms erect, souls of æthereal mould which might have been sublimed to highest deeds beneath a kinder fate, bending to his sway, and not a hand

among

among them that dares avenge their sufferings. Who is there that can mark, unmoved, the various forms of life from the finished gentleman of European courts to the naked savage issuing from the woods to seek his prey? Who can reflect, without emotion, without astonishment and awe, upon the vast space between the " rude Indian's untutored mind" and the ethereal temper of a Milton's or a Shakspeare's soul? and while he reflects, who would not wish to investigate the causes? Yes, every one does, every one must; and these causes are to be looked for, not in the admeasurement of natural objects; not in the tides and currents of the sea, the indentures of the coasts, or the direction of the strata; they are to be sought for in the works of man himself: in his institutions, in his laws; in his polity, his manners, and his customs; in his sports and in his duties; in his religion, in his rewards, and in his punishments;

in

in every thing, in fact, which forms his moral growth and stamps the character upon his mind which distinguishes him from the rest of his species. Such travellers, therefore, as enable me to penetrate these sources; to assemble before me these varieties; to observe these effects; such travellers I regard as the most valuable, for they teach me maxims of wisdom which are of eternal importance: they lay open to me the structure of my fellow-creatures as heirs of immortality; in my heart, I embrace them as my brethren, and I admire the protecting goodness of that providence who has, so admirably, formed for his creatures that physical adaptation of things which leaves them nothing to desire but the self-created wants of a corrupted and artificial nature."

"There is also," said my uncle, "another kind of travels which I read with peculiar pleasure. I mean those which relate to countries once famous, but

but now no more so; and which enable us to contrast what has been with what is. Such are those which describe modern Turkey, Egypt, and Italy. Here the mind has a vast field. It not only contemplates modern degeneracy, but compares it, on the very spot, with ancient valour, dignity, and generosity. Here, too, the lesson is instructive; and the conviction of the perishable nature of all human grandeur, is forced upon the heart with tenfold force. The man who can think of ancient Athens, Lacedemon, Memphis, Babylon, or Rome, and then, without a sigh, reflect upon what they now are, is lost to every great and generous feeling. I could sooner believe the thing most hostile to credulity that fancy ever fabled, than that that man should be capable of one single action which a heart, warm with noble principles, would acknowledge as its genuine offspring."

As my uncle uttered these words, we entered

entered the metropolis. I looked from the carriage window and was astonished at the extent of buildings that spread before me; at the noise that assailed me, at the sight of such moving crowds, passing and repassing, and intent upon various objects. Some, perhaps, hastening to the resort of pleasure, and some to an appointment of business: some in pursuit of vice, and some of virtue; some flying from calamity, and some meeting it; some happy, and some miserable; some thinking of to-morrow's joys, and some shrinking from the anticipation of its evils: some

To undo, and some to be undone.

Splendour and wretchedness, mirth and sorrow, health and disease, vigour and decrepitude, thought and folly, wealth and poverty, Industry and indolence, labour and ease, contentment and beggary, were, here, all contrasted with each other. They passed, in rapid succession,

cession, before me. I was, for a time, bewildered in the tumult of surprise: but, afterwards, I sunk into meditation.

And, will not the day also come methought, when, like those cities that have been enumerated, this too shall pass away? The traveller shall stand upon the banks of the Thames, and look upon the mighty desolation, and ask, where are the crowded streets of the emporium of the world? Where are its mansions of opulence, and its palaces of splendour? Where are its squares, and gardens, and its walks of pleasure? Where are its monuments of art, its stores of wisdom, and its edifices? Where are its lofty natives, who proudly stretched their empire over distant worlds, and bade unknown regions receive their laws, their language, and dominion? Where are its legislators, its warriors, and its poets? Where are its navies that ruled, with absolute sway, the seas of the globe? As the fierce north wind scatters the congregated clouds of Hea-

ven,

ven, even so has ruin swept before it the pride and glory of the empire: scattered in the dust, lies the mighty wreck, a monument of wisdom and a solemn lesson to man's ambition. May not these perhaps be the thoughts, in times to come, of an Indian or an African moralist, whose sublime curiosity may have led him from his native shores to explore the fallen grandeur of England? This is not visionary. The descendants of those painted aborigines of Britain, whom the Roman conqueror subdued, have paused and sighed among the ruins of the Capitol!

CHAP. XVI.

FOR some time after my arrival in London, my hours were employed in viewing those things which a stranger is generally expected to view. Day passed after day in grateful succession: my mind was occupied with endless novelty; I had so much to see, that I had scarcely leisure to think. It is a pleasing state of existence to be able to look forward to an unbroken series of untried delights. Could life be always such, we should never think of death, for there would be no intervals of reflection; and, we should, also, destroy the performance of those duties without which the system of social life could not be upheld. But, as a casual mode of being, as a temporary transition from the monotony of stated avocations,

avocations, it may be cherished with blameless pleasure.

I had not, however, been many weeks in London, before I was tempted to exclaim, in the energetic language of Cowper,—

> Oh! thou resort and mart of all the earth,
> Checquered with all complexions of mankind
> And spotted with all crimes: in whom I see
> Much that I love, and more that I admire,
> And all that I abhor; thou freckled fair,
> That pleasest and yet shock'st me, I can laugh
> And I can weep, can hope and can despond,
> Feel wrath and pity, when I think on thee!
> Ten righteous would have sav'd a city once,
> And thou hast many righteous. Well for thee—
> That salt preserves thee; more corrupted else,
> And therefore more obnoxious, at this hour,
> Than Sodom in her day had power to be,
> For whom God heard his Abr'am plead in vain.

It is, indeed, a melancholy spectacle to behold the vices of a metropolis; and to me they appeared more hideous, because

cause I had been reared in the country, where, though pastoral simplicity is not to be found, yet certainly a greater purity of manners prevails. I will not pretend that villages are the haunts of arcadian innocence and grace: this has always, perhaps, been fiction, for where men assemble together, human passions will be excited and produce analogous consequences. The difference is, that in towns, these passions are more frequently and more intensely excited than they can be in the country; and, consequently, there must necessarily be a greater portion of evil committed by a hundred thousand individuals associated together, than by a thousand. It is this preference only, that I demand for the country; a preference which is founded merely upon local circumstance. To me, therefore, every day presented scenes at which my mind recoiled, and which soon made me eager to return to rural quiet and rural innocence.

I was, of course, introduced to the rest of my uncle's family, which consisted of two daughters, besides Sophia, the eldest ten years old, and one son, in his seventh year. I will not dissemble that I found them very susceptible of amendment; and I truly rejoiced when I saw my uncle seriously commence a reformation upon the principles as laid down by my revered father, in that discourse which has been narrated. I felt a sort of pious consolation in beholding the effects of his wisdom, even after that wisdom had ceased to act in his own person. The beneficial consequences were soon visible, and the children gradually became interesting companions instead of offensive intruders. At first, indeed, they murmured at the new discipline; and, as I was associated with my uncle in the labour of introducing it, they considered me with very little good will. But, after awhile, and when the right road had become as pleasant as the wrong, I quickly

grew upon their esteem and was admitted into their confidence. Of this privilege I availed myself in such a manner as conduced to their benefit. I remembered the words of my uncle, after he had listened to the impressive discourse of his brother, " that he trusted when he next saw his children, he would find their practice in such conformity to his own precepts as would give him pleasure;" and I soothed myself with the hope, that perhaps my father might be a witness of my labours and bless them.

My uncle did not solicit me much to go into society; and the exemption which I obtained for myself he conceded also to Sophia, not as a temporary favour, which I was glad to see; but from a rising belief that neither her health nor her inclination was favorable to it. I was gratified, however, in perceiving that what my cousin had told me of the company which assembled at her father's was not without truth. He frequently

had such parties at his table as left nothing to the mind to wish for. Among them were some of the most eminent of modern literary characters, from whose conversation however, I seldom derived that complete satisfaction I expected: whether it was that I allowed myself to be filled with unreasonable hopes, or, that (as Addison expressed it in reference to himself) though men of genius can draw upon their banker for a hundred pounds, they seldom carry loose change about them.

Among those who most frequently visited at my uncle's, was a Mr. Thomson, a Scotch gentleman, of considerable attainments and much native intellectual power. But he had, what Franklin has considered as a national characteristic, a most voracious love of controversy. To dispute seemed to be the sole end of his existence; and so indiscriminate was his appetite, that I once heard him maintain, for half an hour, an argument with

my

my uncle's cook upon the ingredients of an Oxford dumpling. The culinary champion was vanquished by a mere irruption of words; but I could divine, from his countenance, that had he been acquainted with *Hudibras*, he would have consoled himself with the position that

> He that's convinc'd against his will
> Is of the same opinion still.

Mr. Thomson was a stanch polemic. He was upon the scent for a lax argument like a hound for the game. His eye glistened with delight when he could burst in upon discourse with a 'Sir, you're wrong;' then, fixing himself in his chair, as if, like Antæus, he drew strength from his position, crossing his legs and knitting his brows, he would give vent to such a thundering cataract of declamation, that those who were unaccustomed to his manner, and who happened to be the object of his attack, sat aghast, wondering at what they had said. He seldom

permitted any one to reply; but would check them with a *No Sir*, or a *Pish!* Sometimes, his company profited by his despotism, for he was not without knowledge or wit: but more frequently they suffered, for he seized upon every thing, trifling or important, great or small, and thus perpetually interrupted the quiet stream of discourse.

In this respect I could not but consider him as an incumbrance upon our society and often wished for his absence. Generally speaking, I cannot but think a disputatious disposition a blemish in any character, even when balanced by strong and commanding virtues. It impedes the current of social intercourse and renders it turbid and tumultuous; it often destroys the means of knowledge, and superinduces a character which is neither amiable nor instructive.

There are some particular evils fitted on our natures, which, in their headstrong current, may be productive of good;

good; as, the rash man, following the impulse of his fiery temper, may rescue another from destruction where a moment's pause would lead to irrevocable ruin: the miser, by accumulating his store, may only hoard up wealth for more generous hands to distribute as a general blessing: nay, even the fôul passion of revenge, (where it is known to exist) may elicit negative virtue by awing into peace the turbulent and the vicious. But, this error of disputation appears to me to be a solitary, unfruitful vice, which suffers no plant to flourish in its shade. It is the deadly *Bohon Upas* of domestic intercourse which fixes barrenness on all within its pestilential vapour. I know there are, who contend that it acts as a sort of stimulus upon conversation, which is, otherwise, apt to become inert; and, that it often leads to pleasing and important results from the collision of different minds.

But I doubt this much. At least, I

 have

have never seen these results take place. On the contrary I have seen such as a wise man would be anxious to avoid. The times are past in which truth is to be sought in the calm contests of mind, if, indeed, they ever existed: the conversation of modern society is an anomalous existence, subject to peculiar limitations and guided by certain forms without which, it would degenerate into mere trials of skill. In most cases, when two persons engage in intellectual contention, they only terminate with their own opinions more strongly fixed; for, in the course of the debate, they are compelled to seek for reasons in support of the opinion they happen to maintain; and, whatever the opinion may be, it seldom happens that a man seeks in vain when pride and self-love set out upon the search. These reasons, therefore, which, perhaps, never occurred to him before, appear as so many additional proofs that support his position, whatever

ever it may be; and thus by opposition he gains strength, as a nation often recovers its liberties when an attempt is made to wrest their last vestige from its hands.

Our connexions in society are frail enough, and, it is to be lamented that we strive to increase their insecurity. Yet, how many arts we put in practice which have this decided tendency; which, imperceptibly, sap their foundations, and, at the same time, undermine our own peace.

Among these arts, intellectual contention is not the least fatal, though, from its social appearance, it is more likely to decoy the victim into its snares. Repeated observation has convinced me of what I say, and therefore I consider it as a formidable enemy whose attacks should be guarded against with more than ordinary vigilance. Many, who are aware of this, are, notwithstanding, incapable of withstanding its potency; for rather

rather than their retention should be deemed incapacity, or, rather than lie under the imputation of inferiority they have engaged with all the warmth of professed polemics.

I speak not here of that flow of discourse between friends, where thought illustrates thought, where ideas coalesce, expand, and float along the tide of conversation in harmony and peace; where it is an interchange of knowledge; where, if emulation enter at all, it appears only in an anxious wish to receive and participate each other's feelings; to prolong the smile of pleasure, and to extend the communication of sympathy. This is a noble, a dignified, an enviable use of our faculties; it is an extension of our moral nature, by which the feelings of the heart, relaxed, from inactivity, resume their wonted tone, and by which they are made to yield most delightful vibrations to the kindling bosom. It enlarges the sphere of human affection;

affection; it multiplies our points of contact with our fellow-creatures. But this ennobling, this consolatory application of our intellectual faculties, is practised by few. Too often discourse degenerates into vile, colloquial altercation, where contention is disgraceful, and victory humiliating. It assumes the form of warfare, and with it, all the evils attendant upon contests of mind. I am persuaded that no friendship is invulnerable to repeated attacks of this kind. Men may talk about candour, ardour for knowledge, zeal for truth, abhorrence of error, and all the ordinary palliations by which we extenuate our defeat or vindicate our attack; but humiliation to an ardent, to a generous, to a feeling mind, must always be a painful sentiment. Whatever degrades us in our own eyes, while it diminishes our internal satisfaction, increases our hatred of the cause of that diminution. This is natural; no

man

man willingly regards himself as the immediate occasion of the unfavorable events of life; self-love impels us to look abroad for some extrancous operating principle, however remote, on which we can fasten those results which, in a majority of cases, flow directly from ourselves; and our resentment is in proportion to the acrimony of our feelings.

As mental excellence is valued above corporeal, we naturally cling with fondness to that which will distinguish us most prominently. Who can patiently endure defeat in argument, if he have been warmly interested in its progress and support? and defeat there must be on one side, either real or imputed, when victory is contended for on both. Where is the man, of keen sensibility, who reflects, without painful emotions, upon the circumstances of a discourse, in which irresistible conviction, perhaps, has compelled him, tacitly, to acknowledge his inferiority?

inferiority? Who can vail his head to exulting victory, and not smart beneath the yoke of subjugation.

Nor are these the only evils. In the warmth of debate, in moments when the mind is intent upon an individual object; goaded by opposition, incensed with difficulties, harrassed with exertion, in such moments, who shall be secure that no expression escape him, no taunt, no contemptuous insinuation, which may alienate, insensibly, the warmest friendship? They are uttered in warmth, but they are meditated in solitude and silence; they are investigated; they are applied; they infect the sources of kindness; they spread a torpid coldness over the heart which indurates it against new impressions, and sullies those already existing. Subsequent repetitions aggravate the evil: it usurps entire possession; it reigns in melancholy, desolating solitude!

There is another evil which I am inclined

clined to consider as attendant upon this perversion of intellectual powers. It has a strong tendency to generate falsehood. An ardent polemic, anxious for victory, (and indignant at the thought of defeat) is often tempted to take the shortest way to it.

It seems necessary to establish one distinction here. Discourse may be instructive without opposition. It is not to be supposed, that in the formation of friendship, two minds shall be so exactly conformable, that each shall be the counterpart of the other. The Roman historian indeed, has said, *idem velle et idem nolle, ea demum firma amicitia est*; but this is a state rather to be wished for, than known to exist. There will, and must be, intellectual diversity, and, consequently, room for mutual elucidation and instruction. But this elucidation and instruction, may take place without the parade of learning and superiority; without the offensive anxiety to contend

whatever

whatever is said. They may flow in the even channel of preceptive wisdom, smooth, full and majestic, not roaring in tremendous cataracts which confound the looker on.

The mind which is disturbed by the irritation of argument is but little qualified to receive the calm dicates of instruction: they are thrown into an eddying whirlpool, which convolves them for a moment, and then they sink for ever. Ye who are, ye who hope to be, a friend, abstain from disputation: it is a rancorous disease which will gradually corrupt the sources of your felicity: and though it may not drive you to open enmity, it will assuredly leave you cold, suspicious and malign.

CHAP. XVII.

A PERFECT contrast to the character of Mr. Thomson, was that of Mr. Vaughan, a gentleman of small fortune, and one of the most intimate friends my uncle had. He was a young man, of no very pleasing exterior, and wholly without the foppery of politeness. His knowledge was extensive, and his colloquial powers eminent. He had the art of communication without pomp; he told what he had to tell with the ease of one whose mind, being richly stored, unburthens its produce without labour. In conversation he often entered the lists with Mr. Thomson, and vanquished him, sometimes, by the cool and irresistible force of simple argument. It was highly amusing to behold the latter (whose vehemence of disputation hurried him forwards without reflection), caught in his own toils, and striving in vain, to break through them. When

When Mr. Vaughan had once detected him in any fallacy, he was sure to hold him to it till he renounced it: all his doublings and prevarications availed nothing. It was impossible to irritate his mind by controversy. If he was wrong, he calmly assented to his error when it was discovered to him. If he was right, no sophistry or collusion could bewilder him. The vast stores of his knowledge were always ready for use: and, uniting a very retentive memory to quick powers of combination, he was enabled to diversify his discourse in such a manner as delighted while it instructed. Those who knew little were not made sensible of their ignorance by any repulsive mode that he had of informing them; those who knew much, were pleased in having their memory quickened by his discourse. He fully understood and practised the maxim of the poet,

> Men must be taught as tho' you taught them not;
> And things unknown propos'd as things forgot,

Where

Where there is dignity of mind there cannot be frivolity of character. Mr. Vaughan had the former, and was wholly exempt from the latter. Towards my own sex, his manners were far removed from that exuberant devotion which is a compound of deception, meanness, and imbecility. If a lady dropped her glove, he exhibited no agonies till it was restored to her, nor did he rush, with impetuosity, to the spot that he might be the *happy* individual who was to perform that *duty*. He believed a lady to be gifted with powers adequate to the task. If he walked out with a female, he avoided carrying her parasol for her, either over her head, or under his own arm: to this labour also, he thought her equal. He always declined the distinction of attending them to a mercer's, a milliner's, or a linen draper's; and for all these offences, (great ones they undoubtedly are in the eyes of many), I have heard him severely censured. For my own part, I considered

dered them as evidences of a mind and character compounded of something more dignified than what is essential to the composition of a *lady's man*, as such animals are emphatically called. When, however, I behold the one sex offer, and the other receive, such unmeaning attentions, such vapid courtesies, I know not on which my contempt should fall most heavily. It is difficult to decide which is the most abject, the fool who pleases, or the fool who is pleased. Yet, I think, were I to see a monkey and a man exchanging compliments, I should prefer the monkey.

Mr. Vaughan was a man of great kindness, and he never shrunk from the performance of the active duties of charity. He has, more than once, apologised for not keeping his appointment, by assigning, as a reason, a visit to some distressed or unfortunate being whom he thought he might relieve by his purse, or console with his counsel. Yet, he did

not willingly speak of these actions: indeed, never, unless when the performance of them had impeded some other duty, and he was compelled to disclose the one in vindication of the other. He preferred truth to opinion.

His notions of morality were enlarged and liberal. They were drawn from no sect, nor founded upon single doctrines. They were derived from man himself; they were built upon the simple duties of life. When he has been led to disclose them, in speaking of the actions of others, I was often delighted to find, in what great conformity they were with those of my departed father.

Of the company that used to assemble at myuncle's house, Mr. Vaughan was a frequent, and always a welcome member. The suavity of his manners, the extent of his acquirements, and the virtues of his heart, rendered him dear to all who knew him, though, for want of that specious affability, that superficial polish, which belong

belong to a *fashionable* man, he did not immediately excite esteem. He was naturally diffident; and sometimes, if the company were strange to him, or if the discourse was uninteresting he would preserve an unbroken silence. This, by some, was accounted pride; by others, it was thought to result from a consciousness of his own imbecility. These defects, if such they may be called, operated against him in a first interview.

I remember he came, one evening, much after the time that he was expected. When he entered the room I could perceive, by his countenance, that something unpleasant had occurred to him. There were present, Mr. Thomson, a Captain Tornington, Sir William Stanley, my uncle, and Sophia. My uncle, who noticed the disordered appearance of his friend, asked if any thing had happened.

"You know Mr. Thornton?" replied he.

"Yes, very well."

"He has shot himself. I have just left his wife in a most afflicting situation."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed my uncle, "you alarm and surprise me. What can have been the cause?"

"Nothing but madness, I should imagine," observed Sir William Stanley, "could make any man do that."

"It was the madness of guilt," replied Mr. Vaughan.

"Of guilt!" rejoined my uncle in a tone of surprise.

"Yes. You are not unacquainted with the vice that governed him: I mean gambling. He remained out all last night, at a noted house in St. James's-street: returned home at ten o'clock this morning; and without entering the drawing-room, where he knew Mrs. Thornton and the family were at breakfast, he went into his dressing-closet and discharged a pistol at his head. The report alarmed the house; but when they reached

ed the spot, he was dead. The cause of the fatal deed was known, from a paper which they found in his pocket-book, being a contract by which all his estates were mortgaged to the villain who had despoiled him on the preceding night."

"Being thus circumstanced," replied Mr. Thompson," it is no wonder he shot himself. The crime is his alone, and so will be the punishment."

"The crime is *his* alone," answered Mr. Vaughan with astonishment. "Is there no crime in abandoning a helpless wife and family to utter ruin?"

"Why, yes," rejoined Mr. Thomson, "there is a crime in that to be sure. But, at the moment of his committing the rash act, it was not in his power to prevent that evil. I speak only of the crime of suicide."

"You wish then to consider the crime without looking to the causes or the consequences. But, you should remember that all crimes are aggravated or palliated

 by

by their causes and by their consequences; and consequently, if we not only commit the crime, but create the cause, our guilt is greater in proportion.

"Do you then think suicide a crime?" asked Sir William Stanley.

"Without referring to religion," answered Mr. Vaughan, "I will answer your question by another. Is there any man, so insulated from his fellow-creatures, as to be wholly unconnected with them in any respect whatsoever? If such a contradiction could exist, self-murder might admit of palliation perhaps. But as this contradiction *cannot* exist, as every man is connected with other human beings in some relation or other; as he has duties to perform; and as his neglect of those duties would not be a virtue, it is impossible that it can be otherwise than a crime, to do that which renders this neglect inevitable and eternal. If too there is a general chain of being, and every man, when he is born into the world,

world, is born into it for the performance of certain actions, necessary, it may be, to the universal system of existence, how can he snap that chain asunder without being criminal? The disorder which may be occasioned in the plan of creation by the premature destruction of one of its parts, may be great, though not known to us, because a finite intellect cannot comprehend an infinite design: and the miseries which we endure may be a necessary part of the whole. No one, in my opinion, can defend self-murder, who admits the existence of a deity and his attributes. Human wisdom, as derived from human actions, will serve us here. We admit that the Almighty has placed us in this world for purposes, of which part is known to us, and part is concealed. It is allowed that we are his creatures; and it is known that he has assigned a particular limitation, an appointed period, in which we shall be called away from the discharge of

those

those functions which are allotted to us here. This period is natural death, as arising from physical or other causes, produced by God. Let us now imagine that a man hires a servant to do certain work, and that a contract is entered into between the master and this servant, that a certain time shall elapse before the latter shall be at liberty to renounce his office——."

"Aye," interrupted Mr. Thomson, "but the case is not in point. There is no contract between man and the Almighty."

"There certainly is a virtual contract," replied Mr. Vaughan, "between the creator and the created, and a contract of far greater obligation and of higher import, than any that can take place between man and man. The efficacy of this contract is admitted as often as we admit the attributes of God; and he who does *not* admit these attributes has no right to be considered as a rational being. The case, therefore, as I stated it, though

'comparing

'comparing great things with small,' appears to me to be sufficiently analogous for my purpose. The company, I dare say, can anticipate what will be my application. It will not, surely, be said that this servant, having made this contract, has a right to abrogate it by his own act; for, to a condition which is established by two persons, it is requisite that the same two (or some other two invested with adequate powers by the original parties) should concur to its repeal. It is evident, also, that much inconvenience, and perhaps injury, would result to the master by the desertion of the servant."

"But you forget," replied Mr. Thomson, "that the servant might consider ill treatment as a sufficient plea for anulling the contract."

"By that, you mean to insinuate, that the misfortunes of life, as proceeding from the Author of all, are analogous to ill treatment from the master to the servant,

servant. But here the comparison will *not* hold. Actions between man and man, are known to be good or bad, by their immediate effects. If one man strike another and fracture a limb; or if he deprives him of food, of clothing, or abridges him in any of his comforts, such actions are acknowledged and felt to be wrong because they are injurious, and because we have no reason to expect ultimate benefit, or to attribute, to the perpetrator, other motives than such as are bad. But, in all that proceeds from God, we may without offence to reason, and we ought, in the conviction of our own ignorance, to believe that perfect wisdom and justice are the motives; that nothing can be wrong in reference to him, and that, consequently, none of his dispensations can be considered as a justification of our destroying that tacit covenant which we enter into. These reasonings, which have for their foundation no other basis than that of nature,

have,

have, I confess, always appeared to me sufficiently cogent to overthrow the flimsy sophistry which some have urged in support of the propriety of suicide. But, beyond these, there is a positive inhibition from the mouth of God himself; at least I shall always think so, till I can be convinced that the fifth commandment of the decalogue is meant to apply only to the destruction of others; and, were I tempted to commit so mad and guilty a deed, I hope I should rather exclaim with Shakspeare,—

> Against self-slaughter
> There is a prohibition so divine
> That cravens my weak hand.

"I am wholly of your opinion," replied my uncle, "and I have always considered suicide as an act which is warranted neither by nature nor by religion."

"It is a favourite doctrine with its abettors," said Mr. Vaughan, "to consider

sider life as an intended blessing, and as a state into which they have been forced. They then argue, that if the blessing be withdrawn, and if that state into which they have been forced be rendered insupportable from calamity, there is no reason why they should continue it. But there is so much impiety in this, that it deserves no refutation."

"Nay," added Captain Tornington, "they even go so far as to maintain that Providence never meant his creatures to be unhappy; and that, when they become so, it is an acceptable act to the deity to avoid it by voluntary death."

"That," said my uncle, "arises from a very common fallacy. Men are apt to regard only single attributes of the Almighty. They consider his mercy, but forget his justice; and infinite mercy, they think, cannot cause misery."

"And they think rightly," rejoined Mr. Thomson, in a triumphant tone.

"The perversions of our reason are so numerous,"

numerous," said Mr. Vaughan, "and so easy, that when a man is resolved to cavil, what is there that cannot be disputed? The plainest duties of life may be obscured by misrepresentation. But he who seeks for truth with a mind willing to find it, and a heart, humble enough to hear its voice, will never seek in vain. The pride of reason is a fruitful source of error, inconsistency, and guilt. I pity those, whose minds are like a sieve, that lets through the grains of gold, and keeps only the chaff. And there is nothing more easy than this sort of opposition to truth; for,

> Errors, like straws, upon the surface flow,
> He who would seek for pearls must dive below."

I listened, with deep attention, to this discourse. I did not offer any observations of my own, for I preferred the pleasure of instruction: and, indeed, the opinions of Mr. Vaughan so exactly coincided with my own, that I saw no

room

room for remarks. Mr. Thomson rather shunned the contest this evening; for, he had very recently experienced the superior acumen of Mr. Vaughan's mind.

After a short pause, my uncle reverted to the cause of the late discussion, and lamented the fatal catastrophe which would cause such severe affliction to Mrs. Thornton.

"I am inclined to believe," said Mr. Vaughan, "that it will be in my power to save her from the worst part of the calamity, the loss of the family estate. Upon looking over the infamous contract, I discovered in it a defect which destroys its validity: and the wretch in whose favour it was made, will not dare to bring his claim into a court of justice."

"Pray," said Captain Tornington, "do you consider such a proceeding as strictly just?"

"Certainly," replied Mr. Vaughan; "no

"no compact, which is founded upon injustice, ought to be considered as binding; and even if it be said, that, as a debt of honour, Mr. Thornton, if living, would be bound *by* honor (falsely so called) to discharge it, the same obligation cannot be imposed upon me. I should scarcely think myself bound to perform a promise extorted from me by a highwayman with a pistol at my breast.

> Ease would recant
> Vows made in pain as violent and void.

"But you will not," said Captain Tornington, "compare a highwayman with a gentleman who plays."

"If I were," replied Mr. Vaughan, "the insult would be offered to the highwayman. But when you speak of a *gentleman* and mean a *gambler*, I am at a loss to comprehend how you understand the words. There is not, in society, a more despicable and worthless

worthless character than a gambler.—A highwayman must be a brave, and often, he is a generous, man: but a gambler is a malignant, cool, artful villain, who lays his snares with subtle cruelty, and triumphs over his prey with insulting mockery. The evils which he perpetrates extend to the innocent in their consequences, and often, he commits them *on* the innocent. I cannot conceive a heart more entirely depraved, than that of a professed gambler. Other crimes are done from the operation of causes that sometimes present a show of palliation, as sudden anger, revenge, intoxication, &c. but the gambler has none of these excuses; for a cool, deliberate, and collected mind, is essential to the success of his practices."

"Poor Mrs. Thornton," ejaculated my uncle, "I sincerely hope you will be enabled to benefit her in the way you expect: and I am sure her advantage will not be greater than your happiness."

Mr.

Mr. Vaughan, who did

"Good by stealth, and blush'd to find it fame,"

received this encomium with that ingenuous diffidence which dignifies the virtue it adorns.

When the company departed, my uncle observed to me, with a playful raillery of manner that he always observed, I was particularly silent when Mr. Vaughan happened to be one of the party. The accusation was unexpected, but it carried truth with it, and I felt the colour rise into my face.

"I observe," continued he, "that you sit and listen with such a seeming delight to *his* discourse, that you never consider with how much delight he would listen to *your's*."

"Indeed," said Sophia, who was malicious enough to enjoy my confusion; "indeed I think you are very unkind. Mr. Vaughan asked me, the other day, whether my cousin was always so taci-

turn.

turn. I did you justice, and said that you were very loquacious; and I told him that I supposed his presence was disagreeable, and that was the reason why you seldom spoke when he was in company. And is not that the reason, cousin?"

I saw the snare that was laying for me, and strove to avoid it, by observing, that Mr. Vaughan was not disagreeable to me, but that I was silent because I preferred listening to talking. I then attempted to say something about his superiority of intellect, but my uncle stopped me by replying, that I paid a very ill compliment to himself, for I never stood in such awe of *his* intellect.

Here was another dilemma, and I strove to evade it by alleging my familiarity with my uncle, as the cause why I shewed less deference to him.

"Nay," replied my uncle, "you have been in the habit of seeing Mr. Vaughan almost every evening, for these several months

months past, and therefore you cannot feel much restraint in his company; and, indeed," continued he, with a keen, satirical look, "I must do my good friend the justice to add, that, since my return from Cumberland, he has very assiduously favoured me with his presence. He told me, as he quitted me to-night, that he should certainly *call* to-morrow evening; but he contrived, beforehand, to ask whether my niece was to be at home."

"Yes," added Sophia, "and I recollect that my cousin, this afternoon, shewed a few signs of impatience when we sat down to dinner without him: and she had an irresistible propensity to look towards the door every time it opened."

"Well," said I, with a smile, for I found it was in vain to put a serious face upon the matter, "you seem resolved to understand something, though you scarcely know what. To be sure,

Mr. Vaughan is a gentleman of very interesting character; he has an excellent heart, and a very superior mind, but ——"

"Aye, aye," interrupted my uncle, "we know the meaning of that *but*: it is a very important monosyllable sometimes; you mean to say—*but* he has never made any declaration of his affection to you."

"Indeed Sir, I did not mean to say so," I replied, a little provoked at this overt attack.

My uncle, however, still continued to rally me, and I still continued to defend myself, though with less and less effect at every fresh attack. At last, he permitted me to retire to my chamber, and I was not unwilling to escape from an examination that harassed, even while it half pleased me. When Sophia came into my room to bid me good night, I attempted to appear grave, and to remonstrate with her upon the unkind

manner

manner in which she had joined with her father against me. But the little rebel answered my reproaches only with an arch smile, and with a menace of telling Mr. Vaughan all that had passed. I was forced to be silent therefore; and when, at last, I laid upon my pillow, the recollection of what my uncle had said, the feelings that possessed my bosom, and the remembrance of my father's dying injunction, concurred to keep me awake during the greater part of the night.

CHAP. XVIII.

On the following day, when Mr. Vaughan came, I happened to be alone in the drawing-room, and I could not help feeling a little confusion as he entered.—He perceived this, and, with a respectful timidity, he apologised by saying, that he hoped he had not intruded unseasonably. This served rather to heighten than to abate my embarrassment, and I scarcely know in what manner I assured him that he was mistaken in his apprehensions. I then strove to enter upon indifferent conversation, but I know not how it was, my thoughts seemed chained: and I had no power of words to express even the few ideas that I could command.

I was relieved, at length, from my awkward situation by my uncle, who entered the room with a Mr. Carson, a literary

literary character of some distinction. I inquired after Sophia, and her father told me that she was with her German master.

"Does your daughter study the German language?" inquired Mr. Carson.

"Yes," answered Sir James, "she expressed a strong wish to do so, and she has a master that attends her every day. I do not know what her progress is, for I am not, myself, a German scholar. But there is a lady," continued my uncle, pointing to me, "who has read all the German authors of repute, and who speaks the language with fluency."

I thought I perceived a glow of pleasure upon the cheek of Mr. Vaughan as my uncle said this, and I know not how it was, but I wished to increase that pleasure, and I replied that I had paid some attention to the language, and had read several of their authors with great delight.

"It is not very easy to be acquired," said Mr.

Mr. Carson, "from its total dissimilitude to any ancient or modern language, and from its abounding in numerous combinations formed from a few roots."

"Perseverance," replied Mr. Vaughan, "will overcome that difficulty, as, indeed, it will every other difficulty: and when it is overcome, no one will regret the trouble. Schiller alone would be an ample recompence."

"I am not competent," observed my uncle, "to speak upon this subject, because, the few works which I have read were translations; and, I must confess that, in a translation, Schiller does not appear to be that genius which his admirers say he is."

"You are not, indeed, a competent judge," I replied. "In fact, you cannot be. You, I am sure, would read Schiller with strong emotion in the original. His genius is bold, terrible, and commanding; his fancy is vivid, forceful, and creative. His '*Robbers*' is an astonishing

astonishing production. But, of all this you can be no judge. I have looked into and compared the best translations of him, and they only additionally convinced me that an author of genius is not *translatable*, if I may be allowed to make a new word. Tell me: if a miserable sign-painter should attempt to trace one of the finest pieces of Raffaelle or Titian, and shew it to me, who have never seen the original, should I have any idea of those powers which receive such universal homage and admiration? Just so it is with Schiller. All his works abound with touches of peculiar grace; with imagery of an uncommon stamp; with language, beyond idea, beautiful and energetic. Such a man is *not* to be translated, unless, indeed, a Schiller could arise to perform the task; and even then he would often find it impossible to obtain *synonima* which would convey, to an English reader, all the indefinable beauty of the original."

I looked

I looked towards Mr. Vaughan as I pronounced this, and saw him fixed in deep attention to what I was saying. I then reflected upon what my uncle had observed last night, and ventured to steal a glance at him. There was a significant smile upon his countenance, and when his eyes met mine, they expressed a volume of meaning. I was confused, and remained silent. Yet, I was not sorry that I had spoken, if it were only as a triumphant refutation of my uncle's assertion. I felt, however, that I could say no more.

"I think," said Mr. Carson, "he never excelled the *Robbers*. From the first page of this work to the last, the reader's heart is chained to his pen, and moves at its command. Every character, from the heroic and dignified Charles to the soft and plaintive Amelia, is invested with such appropriate colours, that they can belong only to those who have them. This is the perfection of dramatic writing, and

and this perfection Schiller has completely attained. Even his most extravagant flights hold us in admiration. He possessed a genius of peculiar sublimity: that, and pathos, I conceive to be two qualities in which he eminently excelled."

"Of his sublimity," said Mr. Vaughan, "he never gave a higher proof than in the first scene of the fifth act of the *Robbers*, where *Francis*, waking from a horrid dream, recounts it to his servant, and pourtrays such a picture of the last day, as must be pronounced sublime. I will tell you," continued he, addressing himself to my uncle, "where you may read this passage with little loss of its effect; in the *Etymologicum Magnum* of the Rev. Mr. Whiter, of Cambridge, who has rendered it with an energy and force little inferior to the original. As for the other translations, they have been performed by men who had no other qualification

for

for the task than a knowledge of the German language; and not always that."

"There is," said I, for I was resolved to say something, "a very beautiful passage in the scene between Charles and Amelia, when the former is unknown to the latter. Overcome by the resemblance of feature, voice, and manner of her Charles, as existing in a stranger (according to her conception) her unsubdued feelings impel her forwards, and she exclaims, with a mixture of reproach, remorse and admiration,

> 'Und musstest du kommen aus fernen landen eine Liebe zu stürzen, die dem Tode trotzte? Gott vergebe dir's, Jungling!'

The pathos of the exclamation, 'Gott vergebe dir's jüngling!' is irresistible. I remember also, in *Wallenstein*, a beautifully simple melody which *Thekla*, (who is a sister to *Amelia*) sings, after Piccolomini has torn himself from her arms; I do not recollect it all, but it begins

Der

Der Eichwald brauset, die Wolken ziehn,
Das Mägdlein wandelt an ufer's grun, &c.

The rhythm too is expressive: as in the line,

Es bricht sich die Welle mit macht, mit macht,

and the plaintive eloquence of the last three lines struck me very much:

Du heilige, rufe dein kind zurück
Ich habe genossen das irdische gluck,
Ich habe gelebt und geliebet.

My uncle could not help smiling as I pronounced these lines with some degree of enthusiasm, for to him, the meaning was a concealed treasure; and the guttural sound of the German language never failed to amuse him. Mr. Carson smiled too, but, perhaps, *he* smiled from another cause.

"You are so well acquainted with Wallenstein," said Mr. Vaughan, "that I dare say you remember a fine speech of *Maximilian Piccolomini*, which depicts the blessings

blessings of peace to nations and to individuals. It commences,

> O schöner tag! wenn endlich der Soldat
> In's leben heimkehrt, &c.

"I remember it well," I replied, "and I was, at the time, so delighted with it, that I attempted to render it into English: but my version did not please me, and I destroyed it."

"While we allow the sublimity of Schiller," said Mr. Carson, "we must also admit that he is no less eminent in a happy employment of single expressions which convey their meaning forcibly to the heart. In this felicity he resembles Shakspeare, as he does, in many other respects. In all his dramas you trace the hand of a master; yet, it is singular that his best, (I mean the *Robbers*) was his first. He wrote this in his twentieth year; but he acknowledged that the reading of Shakspeare was what first awoke in him the love of poetry. How eloquently

eloquently he describes the origin of this play; produced while he was at the military school at Stutgard; and for which he was expelled the institution."

"His *Don Carlos*," replied Mr. Vaughan, "is constructed more critically than the *Robbers*; but it has none of its wild energy· it has but few fine passages; *Wallenstein* is a very unequal performance. Next to his *Robbers* I should be inclined to place his *Kabale und Liebe*, which has been ridiculously called the *Minister*, by its translator. The character of *Louisa* is not inferior to *Amelia*, and that of *Ferdinand* is almost equal to *Charles*."

"I place Schiller, unconditionally, at the head of German literature, in works of genius and imagination," I replied. "He has no equal that I know of. Klopstock I have had no opportunity of reading. Goethe has shewn great powers of pathos in his *Leiden des jungen Werthers*; but he is indebted to his subject for much

of

of that emotion with which we read it. Gessner is no favorite of mine: he is too tame; and, often, too childish. I have, indeed, no relish for that nauseating Arcadian simplicity, where all the swains are beautiful, and all the maidens virtuous; where *Strephons* carve upon the bark of trees, and *Delias* read, what they carve, with tears and sighs; where they drive their flocks into the same valley, and the lover pipes, and the mistress hears; and then they go home at sun-set, and put their sheep into the fold, and have a dance, and sing love ditties. Florian has too much of this in his works; and such pastoral inanity, has not, I confess, any charms for me. Hence Gessner gave me little pleasure in perusal. His "Death of Abel" has some interesting passages; but it is too tame, and wearies you before you reach the end. I forget whether it is in that, or in his *Idylls*, that he apostrophises nature with much eloquence: it begins

O! wie schön bist du Natur, &c.

"I know

"I know the passage to which you allude," said Mr. Carson, "and it is in a piece which he calls *Die Gegend in Grase.* But what do you think of Wieland?"

"Wieland," I replied, "is a writer of a very superior cast, in my opinion, which you flatter me by asking. All that I have read of his gave me unmingled delight. His prose is elegant and natural; and his fancy is peculiarly delicate and refined. His "Oberon" is an amusing and interesting poem, though not distinguished by any great display of genius or talent."

"The object of the work," said Mr. Vaughan, "is, in itself, extravagant and incredible: and the catastrophe being produced by the agency of spirits, diminishes the admiration that would, otherwise, be felt for the hero if he had, himself, devised plans for its execution, and brought them to a successful completion through imminent perils and dangers."

"The

"The fiction is indeed too childish," said I. "The tales of the nursery should not be illustrated by the pen of the poet. The time is past in which the feelings of wonder, or the emotions of joy, can be raised by enchanters and fairies, by magicians and demons. *Huon*, gifted with the horn, is known to possess a certain remedy against danger and surprise; and, we cease to interest ourselves in his calamities, or divine, by what happy dexterity he will extricate himself from them."

"The ludicrous effect of the horn, however, is irresistible," said my uncle, who had read this poem in a very good translation.

"Yes," I replied, "but while we laugh, we are offended at the cause of our laughter. Truth, real or probable, must be found in every work which aspires to please permanently."

"In the sixth canto," observed Mr. Vaughan, "he has told the story of January

nuary and May with less humour than Chaucer, and less elegance than Pope: but its introduction is sanctioned by the influence which it has upon the action of the poem. This work, however, is not wholly without pleasing passages. In the sixth canto there is a stanza which contains an expression that is eminently beautiful:

Ein blick in Amor's thau gebadet.

And there is great luxuriance and delicacy in the description of the bower of Almansaris in the twelfth canto. In fact, it may be justly said of Oberon, *materiam superabat opus*, to use a very trite Latin phrase."

"Notwithstanding," said I, "the passages you have mentioned, I cannot think that the defect of plan is compensated either by ingenuity of incident or brilliancy of language. The reader is led forward by the curiosity which he feels to discover what new accidents may befal

 his

his hero; and, after the completion of his hazardous undertaking, he still proceeds, from the natural inclination which we have, to finish a book that we have more than half perused. But there is nothing, either in sentiment, character, or illustration, which lays hold upon the mind. We read, with frigid indifference; we are sometimes moved to smile, but the author never succeeds in raising any stronger passion. There are few parts so felicitously executed that we wish to retain the memory of them, or recur to them for a second perusal. This is a strong test of merit. Any poet may weave a fable of such incidents that mere curiosity shall stimulate a reader to go through it; but if, at the conclusion, the book be closed, without the consciousness that it contains any one part more eminent than another, it is a just presumption that it is performed without any irradiations of genius; and this, in my opinion, is the case with *Oberon*. I

do

do not, however, wish to depreciate Wieland; he is a man of very superior talents: and he has written much that deserves to be remembered."

"I imagine," said my uncle, "that Kotzebue is an author who does not lose much by translation; and therefore, I may, perhaps, venture to express my dislike of his writings."

"Kotzebue," replied Mr. Carson, "is indebted to French and English translations for a celebrity which his intrinsic merits would never intitle him to. I dare prophecy, that if I live to the ordinary age of man, I shall live to see this author remembered, only as we now remember the mob of authors who wrote in the beginning of the last century."

"Germany," said Mr. Vaughan, "like every other country, will have its good and its bad authors; and bad authors will, sometimes, reap a transient renown, which must not, however, be confounded with true fame."

 "Germany

"Germany has its bad critics too," said my uncle, "for there was a time, and I believe the time is not yet past, when Ossian was preferred, among them, to Homer."

I now looked towards my uncle with a triumphant smile, as much as to say, you see that I am not awe-struck in Mr. Vaughan's presence; for I had, in fact, talked more than I should have done probably, but for the raillery of my uncle and Sophia, on the preceding night. Sir James returned my smile by another; but I could read, in his countenance, that he considered my effort as violent, and not as the simple effect of my feelings. Perhaps he was right.

Mr. Vaughan, addressing himself to my uncle, said that he had received a letter that day from their mutual friend, Mr. Clarke, complaining vehemently of his (Mr. Vaughan's) estrangement from him. "He reproaches me," he continued, "with being always at your house."

I am

I am certain that Mr. Vaughan uttered this without the least intention of its carrying the import which it did. But it corresponded so pointedly with my uncle's late discourse, that I was almost overwhelmed with confusion; and without venturing to look at him, for I could anticipate the cool, satirical glance that would be directed to me, I immediately quitted the room. I hastened to Sophia, who had just done with her German master, and I told her my embarrassment; but, instead of consoling me, she added to it, by replying that she had received a letter that morning by the post, which enclosed one for me.

"For me!" I exclaimed. "Who can it be from?"

"Really," replied she, "I cannot tell, for I have not opened it. But I can tell you who that came from, in which it was enclosed; and then, perhaps, we may be able to discover something about the other. *My* letter came from Mr. Vaughan."

"Mr.

"Mr. Vaughan!" I uttered with surprise and vexation, for Sophia was smiling at me.

"Yes, Mr. Vaughan," she replied with an assumed gravity; "and I am extremely sorry to hear of the accident that has happened to him."

"What accident," said I; then suddenly recollecting myself, I added, "Nonsense! you are only trifling with me. I have just quitted the drawing room, and left Mr. Vaughan there, in perfect health. But what accident, pray——".

"Oh! a very serious one," she replied. "He has fallen in love! Aye, and in a very uncommon way too. He has fallen in love with a lady's mind. He is in such distress about it, poor man, that he has written to me to beg that I will tell you of it: for there is a great consolation in sympathy, you know, cousin."

"Well, well," said I, "I'll humour your

your mirth. And whom has he fallen in love with?"—I was very grave as I uttered this.

"Why, really," said she, "he has not given me a description of her: but he says that he has described her very accurately in your letter. Here it is, read it; and then we shall know."

I took the letter with hesitation; it was addressed to me. I looked at Sophia, upon whose countenance there dwelt an arch smile of most intelligible meaning. I held the letter, irresolute whether to open it or not, for there had been such a mixture of mirth and gravity in the manner of Sophia during our conversation, that I scarcely knew how to consider the matter. I certainly longed to see its contents: but I certainly did not wish to read a description of Mr. Vaughan's mistress in this letter as the first intelligence I was to receive of her. After some moments of internal conflict, I at last, resolved to retire

to

to my own chamber, and there, being alone, peruse the letter. I did so, and with precipitation, for my cousin's raillery was overpowering.

I opened the letter. I read it. It was from Mr. Vaughan. It was true, he loved; it was true, he disclosed to me the name of his mistress; it was true, he implored me to feel for his situation. All this was true; and it is likewise true, that I did feel for his situation; that I most cordially approved of his choice; and that I had a very high regard for her. Surely, no female reader will require me to disclose her name.

Sophia followed me to my room. I was sitting, with the letter open before me, lost in a world of contemplations. It would be in vain to attempt to describe them. Nay, if I could, I should shrink from the undertaking. There are many feelings of the heart, sacred to the bosom which contains them, but whose purity would be violated by exposure.

When

When we endeavour to depict the emotions of others, considered as acting under the influence of certain situations, it is allowable to draw our notions,

ab ipsis recessibus mentis.

And the more we do so, the more certain is our merit. This is the peculiar praise of Shakspeare. But, when we have to describe ourselves, and to depict, not what we imagine, but what we know, it is decorous and modest to draw a veil over those feelings which nature warrants, but which custom has ordained should be dissembled. Silence, therefore, is imposed upon me.

Sophia, taking me by the hand, asked me now, in a mingled tone of affection and joy, if I had discovered the secret? I smiled through a tear of delight, and rising from my chair, led her into the drawing room. I dared not look towards Mr. Vaughan, and I fancied that even Mr. Carson

Carson could read the thoughts that passed in my mind.

When we entered, they were engaged in a discourse respecting the energy of friendship in modern times, and Mr. Vaughan spoke with great animation of its duties and delights. My uncle said that he thought love was very analogous to friendship; and that the feelings of the former as existing between persons of opposite sexes, did not differ greatly from those of the latter, as existing between two of the same sex. They discussed the topic at much length. It was one, however, in which, for obvious reasons, neither Sophia, nor myself, could take a part. But I listened with pleasure to Mr. Vaughan, who vindicated, with great eloquence, the rights and character of effective friendship.

It was an interesting subject, and it took such possession of my mind, that I could not help reflecting upon it the following

lowing day. That my reflections were agreeable to myself, need not be told: that they will be so to my readers, they may ascertain who peruse the following chapter.

CHAP. XIX.

I CANNOT think that there is so little difference between friendship, considered as existing between two individuals of the same sex, and love between two of different sexes. Can we, in fact, discover one point of similarity between them? Can we trace, in any respect, the same line of feeling or of conduct? It is impossible that we can, for, they are as different, in their very nature, as avarice and profusion, as cowardice and valour, as virtue and vice. I must here observe also, that friendship can be spoken of only in relation to the other sex: hardly ever does it exist, in a sincere and solid manner in the breast of a female: for, *they* are, if not formed by nature, yet certainly modelled and fashioned by education and society to receive and nurture, almost *exclusively*, that passion of the human breast

which

which is generally understood by the word *love*. There are, perhaps, two periods of life, when our sex are susceptible of friendship; in the decline, and in the very spring. In the former, the "hey day of the blood" is over, and it "waits upon the judgment;" in the latter, it has not commenced, and the vacant heart receives any image rather than remain in unwarmed vacuity. But, no sooner does that period arrive when the expanding feelings tend all to one point; when the restless soul looks abroad and seeks, (perhaps in vain) some object where it can fix its resting place, some being who shall stretch his arms to catch the wanderer in her hot pursuit; no sooner does that period arrive, than all that was before given to friendship is converted into love; the conversation of their own sex becomes cold and insipid; their gaiety is tasteless, their wit is dull; the sun has beamed above the horizon, and all the little stars that be-

fore

fore glimmered in the hemisphere, look pale and fade away. I know it will be replied, that, in general, women *appear* better able to maintain the current of existence amongst themselves than men; that they, in their own idle tattle, draw sufficient draughts of happiness, to render life easy, and that among themselves they seem more independent of the other sex, than they are of them. But all this is mere collusion. Consider what are the forms of society, and we shall see in *them* the cause of this seeming independence. They are taught, from their very cradles, to carry on a farce of deception; they are instructed, in their infancy, how to conceal the emotions of their hearts, and they learn a settled conduct by which to regulate themselves. Every impulse of native passion is to be repressed; every wish of unsophisticated feeling is to be crushed; they are to pine in secret anguish, to dress the face in borrowed smiles or arm their eyes with counterfeited

counterfeited scorn; they learn a language of dissimulation which is to be used on proper occasions; they are to regard the frank avowal of what they feel, as criminal and indecorous; they must lie, dissemble, prevaricate; they must fly when they would pursue; and often they must stay when they would gladly fly; even to the last, even to the altar they carry it on, and there play off the character with which corrupt custom has shackled them. In the majority of cases they are only puppets moved with wires, which are held first by their parents, afterwards by the world, and then by their husbands: they learn, by rote, the language which they are to carry into society, and which is to disguise the quick springing throbs of nature: to their midnight pillows only they can sigh the melancholy truth, and own that they are human; the morning sun awakes them to the same career, and they put on the mask at their toilettes as regularly

as

as their cloathes. I speak freely, because I speak feelingly.

Let us not deceive ourselves, therefore, in supposing that because they *seem so* they are *really so*. Nature has ordered it otherwise, and though we may hide her voice from the world, we can never hide it from our own hearts; there it will speak, and speak most eloquently too.

Woman turns to man as to her support, her friend and her protector; it is beneath his shade that she would take root; there flourish; there fade; there perish. In the morn of life, when she is just setting forth upon her journey, she seeks her companion; those who were before dear to her, are no longer so; they too are employed in the same pursuit. The much desired object found, her beating heart's at rest; she leans upon his bosom and glides with him down the rough stream of life.' In her breast there is no room for effective friendship; it would

would draw her from the more important duties of her state; nature providentially foresaw this; and ordained that she should fix her whole soul on man and their mutual offspring. In all ages she is born a dependent being; and the consciousness of this, the knowledge of her weakness, impels her to *love*, that power by which she is enabled to tyrannize over the tyrant, to make the master the slave. In a bosom so occupied, friendship can be nothing but an empty name; yet, I grant there are instances which may be produced to gainsay this opinion; but these are rare, very rare; they do not overthrow the tenor of my argument; they only demonstrate, that in peculiar minds the most discordant principles may accidentally associate. The same predisposing causes which formed the antithetical character of *Wharton*, may operate in the same manner here; and as it is confessedly an anomalous

 production,

production, it can have no validity in the light of a refutation.

But, in man, friendship has been a stately and a vigorous plant. In *his* luxurious soil, it has blossomed into beauty and strength. The roots have struck deep in his manly bosom, and beneath its spreading branches, not only woman has found her shelter and her rest, but its ample shade has embraced the feelings of the kindred sex. Twined with the parent stem, we have found courage, constancy, and truth; mingled with the budding foliage, kindness, hope, desire; and the goodly whole has shewn so fair a sight, that the eye looks back with wonder and delight to where it flourished once in pride and splendour. Oh! there have been times, when friendship was the dearest tie that ever bound man to man; there have been times, when the sweet intercourse of heart and mind, walked hand in hand with every step of life,

life, smoothed the rugged path, rendered the bright more charming, and gave an added lustre to the sun that shone around; when all was tributary to that sacred feeling, and he who called himself a friend, he who boasted that envied character, felt a prouder sentiment swelling at his heart, which sublimed him into higher virtues than he could attain alone, and identified him with another soul, another body! In the smile of his friend, he read the applause of the world; in his frown, he saw the reproaches of his own conscience; they were as a mirror to each other, in which they beheld the slightest spot: to live with him was joy; to live for him was bliss yet higher; but to die for him was that height of rapture which left the soul no wish unsatisfied: it was the glorious crown that gave him an empire in the hearts of his fellow-creatures! Sweet was the struggle of contending souls linked in the bands of heavenly friendship! Sweet the mutual

 tear

tear that graceful stole down the manly cheek or dimmed the lustre of the beaming eye, when, in the tender conflict, they equal urged what both must equally refuse! Yes! I have read of those whom *we*, with proud insolence, call *barbarians*, *savages*, of such unmingled energy of soul, of such exalted virtue, and firm contempt of all that can affect corporeal sense, that I have wondered to see our nature so exalted! But where shall we look for this noble structure now? Alas! the very ruins are no more. Like a traveller, who wanders on the spot where Babylon once stood, he asks, where are those walls, those brazen gates, those temples, palaces, and gardens, which formed the wonder of an admiring world? They are gone; they have perished; and where revelry and mirth, where splendour and power once held their abode, the stagnant waters of the marsh are, and the beast of prey lurks unseen. Whence this amazing change?

Has

Has the sterile curse of barrenness been fixed upon the human heart that so it shall produce no more? Has the Creator said, from thy bosom shall spring no virtue; in thy heart no kindness shall awaken? No: man himself has swept away, with a destroying sword, the plenty, and the luxuriance, and the grandeur which were once there. Gold and luxury, enervating effeminacy, have sapped their foundations and laid them level with the dust! We are no longer what we were, and *our hearts*, which are the peculiar temple of friendship, has been sullied with such baseness, with such degradation and falsehood, that the offended goddess left her dominion among men and took her flight to heaven. Let us then, my friend, mourn for her loss, and view the remains of her empire, as preserved in the records of history; with the same feelings that we would wander over the

plains

plains of Marathon or pause at the pass of Thermopylæ.

I firmly believe that a real, effective, unsophisticated friend is no longer to be found in the ranks of social life. Convenient affection, conditional sincerity, agreeable fidelity, are things frequently, very frequently to be found: what does not interfere with any pleasure; what does not require any temporary humiliation of feeling; what does not demand any active endeavours;—will be done by a thousand men. If they can walk their accustomed road; preserve their accustomed character; continue their wonted conduct; all will go well. In moments of distress, they will give a feeble assistance while the sun glimmers above the horizon; they will lend their arm to support you from falling while it does not compel them to bend their own body; but they start back appalled as the shades thicken round you; they plead

plead their delicacy of feeling—their acute sensibilities—they wish you an affectionate farewel!

Is this friendship? Is this that steady devotion which remains unshaken? Is this that divine affection which leaves no craving void in the aching breast? Which seems to fill the social wishes of man, and renders him a being almost independent of the world? Is this that sublime connexion which glows with equal ardour; which invigorates hope; which assuages disappointment; which strengthens virtue; which brightens the luxury of joy? No: this is mere selfish, partial, worldly acquaintance. Yet this is that connexion to which the word *friendship* is prostituted! It is a mighty shadow, which overspreads the mind, and fills it with sadly pleasing emotions: but the substance approaches not the heart: it has withered away!

The

The man* that is my friend is myself; our affections, our hopes, our fears are one; our joys, our pains, our successes are mutual. If I am on the bed of sickness he languishes; if I am unfortunate he has but one consideration, one desire, and that is how to relieve me. If he cannot do it, he is inconsolable; but, ere he allows despair to take possession of him, he tries every honest, every manly, every lawful method to alleviate my sufferings: no sickly sentiments, no morbid delicacy of feeling can operate upon him; *they* are the growth of cold, calculating, systematic hearts; *they* spring up in solitary, unwarmed bosoms: he would blush to think that one avenue existed which might lead his friend to happiness and that he had neglected it: he might shed tears of bitterness and anguish for the evils which he could not remedy, but never would a sigh of remorse escape his lips, never

* Let the sex of the writer be here forgotten. It is the voice of nature that speaks through me.

would

would one compunctious tear wet his cheek, at the remembrance of neglected exertions.

That such a man has existed I know; that he *can* exist I doubt. But that such a man alone can be strictly called a friend I am thoroughly convinced; and, since we retain the appellation, I will add, that in proportion as every man approximates towards such a character, in that proportion does he lay claim to the sacred name of friend; and within this pale it is my happiness to know those who have advanced to a very near approach.

Hear what Cicero says: his authority may have weight where mine would fail: "Quid dulcius, quam habere, quicum "omnia audeas sic loqui, ut tecum? "Quis esset tantus fructus in prosperis "rebus, nisi haberes, qui illis æque, ac "tu ipse, gauderet? Adversas vero "ferre difficile esset sine eo, qui illas "gravius etiam, quam tu, ferret. Deni-"que,

"que, cæteræ res, quæ expetuntur,
"opportunæ sunt singulæ rebus fere sin-
"gulis; divitiæ ut utare; opes, ut co-
"lare; honores, ut laudere; voluptates,
"ut gaudeas; valetudo, ut dolore careas,
"et muneribus fungare corporis: ami-
"citia res plurimas continet; quoquo te
"verteris, præsto est: nullo loco exclu-
"ditur; nunquam intempestiva, nun-
"quam molesta est. Itaque non aqua,
"non igni, ut aiunt, pluribus locis uti-
"mur quam amicitia. Neque ego nunc
"de vulgari, aut de mediocri (quæ ta-
"men ipsa et delectat et prodest) sed
"de vera et perfecta loquor: nam et,
"secundas res, splendidiores facit ami-
"citia, et adversas, partiens communi-
"cansque, leviores."

But, descending from this exalted sphere, once tenanted by those illustrious characters, now extinct, I cannot but think the opinion heterodox even in the common acceptation of the word. Considering this sentiment of friendship in those

those bosoms where alone it is to be found, and with those limitations which are now imposed upon it, I perceive, in the first instance, that *love* is a selfish, *friendship* a social passion; that love respects and considers only one object, while friendship extends to and embraces many; for it requires no argument to prove that the lover and the mistress see, hear, and know, no other object in the world but that which, in the delirium of passion, fills the heart and absorbs the mind. A human being once contemplated under the feelings of sexual affection is exalted and enlarged so as to occupy every desire, every thought; the heart is full, and wishing itself is almost lost in satiety. Now, friendship (remember I use this word in the *common* acceptation) is a much less insulated passion. It may and does extend to many objects; its duties are indeed sacred, but they have long since been reduced to a very small number, and

and those of a wonderfully easy nature. No man thinks it necessary, in these days, either to die with or for his friend; to supply his place in extreme difficulties and dangers, or to exert every human means to extricate him from misfortunes. The business of friendship is reduced to a kind of civil interchange of good offices and a moderate profession of friendly feelings. Hence it so easily expands; hence its divisibility; for an office that is replete with indispensible duties and obligations thoroughly occupies the undivided attention of a man; but when they are few in number, and easy of performance, he has so much leisure time, that he may reasonably take a few more upon his hands.

Another striking variety between love and friendship is, that the former is attended with a whole train of jealousies. I can indeed conceive that friendship may be so warm, even in these times, as to make us somewhat scrupulous of our

our rights, and, if they are invaded, to excite a feeling in our breasts not very unlike jealousy. But there is this difference: jealousy does not consider neglect, coldness, disdain, falsehood, abstractedly, but the converse of these, attention, warmth, respect, and truth, as applied to *another* object. A mistress or a lover being treated thus, merely from the involuntary decay of affection, knowing that it is not to make way for some more favoured person, feels perhaps all the agony of the most afflictive distress; may even lay the sorrow to their hearts, and carry it with them to an early grave; but they are not racked with that wasting demon jealousy. It is, when they suspect themselves to be supplanted; when they imagine that those smiles, those embraces, those sighs, those kind assurances, which they once called their own, are destined, or perhaps already given, to another; then it is that the most fell passion which ever tore the human

human heart seizes upon them, converts their joys into woes, inspires the most furious revenge, and infects, with rancorous ulcers, the very sources of human felicity.

Such is the picture of jealousy and its proximate cause. But he would be derided as a madman who should, seriously, tax his friend with being the friend of another, and expostulate with him upon it, with acrimonious warmth. Yet, if he find that his friend diminishes in his kindness, in his solicitude, in his ardour, and know, or suspect, that these are transferred to another, to *his* utter exclusion; then he feels a sentiment rise in his breast which partakes strongly of the nature of jealousy in its cause, but differing from it widely in its consequence. For he neither storms, nor raves, nor becomes vindictive; the first effervescence of his feelings subsided, he partly regrets, partly despises, partly pities his alienated friend.

But

But there is another discrepancy which strikes me very forcibly. Love is a more ærial passion than friendship. Its pleasures are more extatic; its desires more poignant; its hopes more fervent; it exalts, refines, almost deifies its object. It is accompanied too with a certain generosity, with a certain nobleness of character. Friendship, as it now exists, is infinitely less warm and energetic; friendship is a kind of tacit compact between two persons, by which they agree to be absolutely civil to each other, and, in cases of extraordinary need, to go somewhat further than mere condolence. It is very often a cold and formal intercourse, deprived of animation and destitute of strength: not at all to be compared to the vivid, forceful, ardent sensations of love.

Let it be remembered, that I have constantly spoken of friendship not as it ought to be, but as I have found it in the world. I have described it, as an

easy,

easy, agreeable, convenient occupation of the mind, in which the heart rarely has any share. My reasonings are drawn *from* existing nature, and are therefore most fit to be applied *to* it. Moral wisdom is valuable only in proportion to its relation to real life. The refinements of philosophy and the abstractions of logic are well calculated to sharpen the faculties, and may lead the mind to the discovery of important truths; but as their inferences are not always obvious, as their assumptions are often gratuitous, and as their truth must frequently depend upon future experiment, they cannot often be serviceable in promoting the immediate duties of our state. More effective good has been done to society by the *Ramblers* of Johnson and the *Spectators* of Addison, than by the *Enquiry* of Locke or the *Theory* of Smith.—Sound practical morality, without any turgid swell of sentiment, without those refinements which enthusiastic minds

are

are so apt to unite with every thing which they contemplate, is like a wedge of solid gold compared to trinkets and ornaments worked in the same metal. The worth of the one is sterling and immutable; the other draws its importance from fancy, from feeling, and from the variable passions of the heart: we treasure the first as a lasting dowry; we sport with the other for our amusement, admire its elegance, are pleased with its workmanship, but at length turn disgusted away, and fix our attention upon new toys equally tasteful and equally ingenious.

Convinced of the truth of this, I was led to contemplate friendship in its real, existing colours: I drew the picture first, such as it once was, such as my heart fondly longs to see it again; but then I turned from the pleasing paths of fancy and remembrance, to the living world before me. It was there that I drew my

character, there I traced the features, there found the colouring, and there the shading; not indeed without emotions of sorrow, and the melancholy which fills the mind upon comparing past virtue with modern degeneracy. But I had imposed upon myself the task of truth, and, with unbending integrity, I was bound to follow her steps. If the dazzling lustre of her vest have sometimes bewildered me, and suffered me to wander into the paths of error and inconsistency, my head and heart are acquitted of all intentional dereliction. I know, too, that in every picture which has man for its basis, exceptions must exist; and when we are, unfortunately, occupied in tracing the darkest side of his character, it is pleasing to think that there are exceptions. To a candid moralist, it affords a greater pleasure to illustrate the virtues than to expose the vices of his fellow creatures; a chastened mind reposes, more willingly,

upon

upon the amiable parts of the human heart, than upon those which are sullied and deformed. The placid feelings of a guileless bosom, calm prosperity, and domestic bliss, lead us naturally to the first; a morbid melancholy, a mind broken down by sorrow, which has suffered much in the world's conflict, and seen man, unavoidably, in the foulest scenes of life, as naturally conduct to the latter. Hence, the wide difference between the moral delineations of Addison and Johnson. In the page of the former, man is as a lovely garden, blooming with flowers, and variegated with groves; all is sweet and delightful; the sun brightens every thing around; streams murmur through pleasant vallies, and odours, wafted from dewy plants, fill the air with fragrance; in that of the latter, we are presented with a frightful desert; rocks, caverns, quicksands, are scattered all around; the sky is darkened; the heart

is appalled; terror hovers over us; the ears are filled with dismal cries; nothing is to be seen but vice, deformity, treachery, and ingratitude; the eye recoils back, startled and disgusted; and the mind refuses to recognize the dreadful picture!

CHAP. XX.

The letter which Mr. Vaughan had addressed to me I submitted to my uncle's perusal. I should have considered myself as acting with decided artifice, if I had withheld it from him. The affecting manner in which my deceased parent had consigned me to his protection was motive enough, in my estimation, why I should respect him as my father: nor should I conceal, that his tenderness towards me had awakened in my heart sentiments of regard so lively and so just, that they alone would have impelled me to the proceeding which I adopted.

When my uncle discovered that Mr. Vaughan's intentions were serious, he met them with corresponding gravity. The raillery with which he was wont to pursue me, while he regarded the affair as nothing beyond the common politeness

ness of intercourse, was gradually changed for that solemnity befitting an event on which so much depended. Other thoughts and other hopes occupied him. His friend was to be examined with keener scrutiny.

It was at breakfast, on the morning following the day in which I had received Mr. Vaughan's letter, that I put it into my uncle's hands. I did not do it without trepidation, for I had no power to anticipate its reception. Sophia was in the room. She, indeed, had been of my privy council in the affair, and now awaited the result of our deliberations with scarcely less anxiety than myself.

My uncle read the letter with fixed attention. It may easily be conjectured that it contained *some* passages which would cause a smile, for when has the language of love found courtesy but in the bosom that loves? Other parts, however, excited deep reflection. When he had finished, he looked towards me with

with a most benignant aspect, which, awakening kindred emotions in my mind, the half mantling blush departed from my cheek, and my eyes filled with tears of anticipated gratitude.

"Nubilia," said he, as he marked the visible expression of my feelings, "I have read this letter with a mixture of joy and surprise. I own I did not imagine that Mr. Vaughan entertained hopes so serious. I had, indeed, observed his attentions, and from them I might have drawn better conjectures than I did; for my friend, heretofore, had gone very far towards acquiring (and with just reason) the unenviable renown of a misogynist—that's a very cramp word, my dear," added he, looking at Sophia with a benevolent smile, whose countenance expressed a degree of curiosity which her father satisfied, by telling her that it signified a woman hater. "I can bear ample testimony to his uncourteous reserve towards your sex: and I dare say your

your cousin can bear as good testimony to the invective with which the ladies have, occasionally, assailed him."

"Indeed I can," answered Sophia, "and I used, sometimes, to be half angry with him myself: but I will not confess how much I was vexed when I saw my cousin transform him, at once, into a man of gallantry. She effected, in a week, what I and my friends never could effect."

"As his conversion was sudden," said I, "perhaps it may be transitory."

"And even if it were," rejoined my uncle, "it would not invalidate his other just claims to attention. I never could, indeed, satisfactorily explain the motives of his reserve towards your sex. It was a reserve which was expressed by actions rather than by words. He was affable and communicative; but still, I know not how it was, he seldom pleased the gay visitors that thronged to my parties. They were already attended by fluttering insects,

insects, perpetually on the wing and perpetually buzzing: and with such candidates for attention Mr. Vaughan disdained competition I suppose. Now, when you appeared among us, you seemed as little disposed to receive the laborious civilities, the vapouring politeness, the eternal nothings of these gentlemen as Mr. Vaughan was to offer them. Mutual sympathy therefore attracted you: I can account for it in no other way."

"I should not," I replied, "enhance your opinion of my candour, were I to deny that Mr. Vaughan excited feelings of preference in my mind."

"Of what?" interrogated my uncle, with a modulation of voice that considerably disconcerted me.

"Of preference," I replied, in an accent somewhat subdued.

Sophia smiled as she looked at me.

"Of *preference*, my dear niece?" answered my uncle.

"Yes, Sir."

"Really,"

"Really," replied my uncle, "I should like to hear your definition of that word: I think it would differ greatly from Johnson's. I must confess, I have often admired the ductility of language in a lady's mouth. How much at variance are their tongues and minds."

"And, perhaps," said Sophia, "they ought to be so. When a woman speaks as she feels, she seldom finds a liberal interpreter of her feelings. The world has a willing aptitude to mete every thing by its own measure; and never so willingly as when the thoughts of our sex are to be estimated."

I could have sprung towards Sophia and embraced her for this seasonable relief; and the dear girl, as she afterwards told me, was prompted to speak merely from the benevolent wish of rescuing me from the painful predicament in which my uncle's gaiety had placed me.

Sir James looked at Sophia with great good humour; and when she had ceased

to

to speak, he expressed his doubts of what she had said; but, added he, "I will not examine too rigorously, for were my doubts removed, I fear I should be compelled to confess that the evil has originated with ourselves. However, from the censure which you have uttered, there does not, I believe, exist an individual who has a greater right to be exempted than the very man of whom we have been speaking. I never knew a person so free from that meanest of all vices, the love of detraction. I have often heard him say, and not without some degree of acrimony, that the most liberal estimator of man was a dog. He trusts without suspicion, and confides even when he has been betrayed. Aye, aye," continued he, addressing himself to me, "what animation now sparkles in your eyes, as you listen to this eulogium."

"It always gives me pleasure," replied, with an assumed gravity, "to contemplate

contemplate the human character under its fairest aspect; and it gives me added pleasure when those whom I thus contemplate are of my acquaintance."

"And it must give you treble pleasure," answered my uncle with a smile, "when that very acquaintance is in a fair way of becoming your husband."

"Why yes, Sir; I will not shrink from the implication, nor will I dissemble that to have the prospect of virtue, manliness, and humanity in such a union would give me unfeigned delight, for, with such inmates, nothing could associate that would sully or degrade our pursuits."

"And such inmates," replied my uncle, "I have a most firm persuasion are the cherished associates of Mr. Vaughan's bosom. Believe me, I should behold with sincere gratification this incipient intercourse receiving that termination which it now promises to do. As far as my judgment goes, I do not know a man of whose heart

heart and mind I entertain a higher sense than of Mr. Vaughan's. All his actions are evidences of the benevolence of the one, and of the elevation and solidity of the other."

"I consider them as such," I replied.

"You must have considered them as such," added my uncle, "or else he would never have excited that *preference* you talk of: for he is wholly without those shewy qualities which so easily win their progress to a woman's heart, in the absence of all better ones."

"I think," said I, "your censure is a little too general: for though I most willingly admit, that women too frequently consult their eyes instead of their head, yet I hope, for the honour of human nature, for the honour of my own sex, aye, and for the honour of yours too, there are not wanting those whose dignified sense of right and wrong, and whose just perception of intrinsic excellence would lead them to reject with disdain those

those equivocal animals whom grace and beauty attract, as the sun does vapours from a stagnant marsh."

"I hope there are," replied Sir James. "Indeed I know there are," added he, looking significantly at Sophia and myself. "Yet, I have often thought, when I observed the neglect with which poor Vaughan was treated by your sex, that if nature had not ordained that in every breast a strong and invincible impulse should impel man forwards, women would, in a majority of cases, be held in utter contempt. Were it not so, what could rescue them from neglect and disdain, when we behold them lavish their regards upon petty coxcombs, upon ignorant fops, upon debauchees, gamblers, and unprincipled wretches; when we see those charms and those attractions, which endear and embellish life, thrown away upon the worthless and the despicable, while the modest, the virtuous, the cultivated, the feeling man, because he

he possesses a less pleasing exterior perhaps, less petulance of manner, and less insignificance of deportment, is unheeded and despised?

"Your reproach is just," said Sophia; "but where shall we look for the remedy?"

"Where *can* we look for it," answered Sir James, "but among yourselves. I shall not be suspected of unmeaning compliment when I say that it is in the power of your sex to produce the most beneficial reform in the manners of society. Let there be no admirers of folly, ignorance, and vanity, and they would soon disappear. The majority of mankind are content to follow the common channel of reception: and if they can attain their object (which, in this case, we admit to be the notice of the fair sex) without virtue, without sense, and without character; virtue, sense, and character will become obsolete terms, except to those who hold all other distinctions

tinctions as subordinate to the qualities that raise the man above the mere accidents of circumstance. And one of this very limited number is my friend Vaughan."

"If then," said I, "the female part of the rising generation were educated with that simplicity of understanding which would disdain the frivolities, the weaknesses, and the vices of the other sex, you think that an important reform would ensue?"

"I certainly do," replied my uncle, "and I am sure you must be as sensible of the truth of this as myself. It would be superfluous to ask you whether you would not consider such a reform as beneficial: you have provided an answer to such an interrogatory by the election which you have made. But, respecting that election, take counsel from time. I would not have you confound what *may* be the effect of novelty and the effervescence of youthful feeling, with what *ought*

ought to be the simple dictates of the heart corroborated by the solemn sanction of the judgment. I will discourse with my friend: but be under no anxiety: I will not unnecessarily retard the completion of your hopes."

I was somewhat abashed at this appeal to my patience as implying a truth, which, however real, I half wished to believe concealed. I would not, however, incur any thing more explicit by a disavowal of its propriety. I acquiesced with a faint smile, and remained silent. The conversation insensibly wandered to other topics, and in a short time my uncle left the room.

When Sophia and myself were alone, it was some time before either of us spoke. Of the thoughts which were passing in my own mind I have no distinct recollection. They partook of that confused ambiguity, of that rapid change, which always prevail when our ideas are excited by any circumstance which in-

 volves

volves much uncertainty as to the event, but which strongly interests our feelings. A thousand images presented themselves, and were dismissed to make room for a thousand more as vague and as transitory as the former. Hope and fear swayed my mind alternately, and, as either predominated, joy or melancholy presided. It was in these moments that I severely felt what a mother might have been to me. I should have found counsel in her, which, coming from maternal lips, would have been heard without repugnance: I should have found sympathy too, which, springing in a mother's heart, would have comforted and relieved me. But these endearments were denied.

My reverie was interrupted by Sophia, who proposed that we should go up into the library. I cheerfully assented, for I was glad to escape from the tyranny of reflection.

CHAP. XXI.

My uncle had a well chosen, but not a numerous collection of books. In their selection he had studied utility rather than ostentation. He had not loaded his shelves with authors that were to be consulted rather than read; nor did he consider it as necessary to have every work of acknowledged merit in every department of knowledge. It was impossible that he could peruse them all; it was equally impossible that he could duly understand them all; and he could not therefore comprehend why he should have them all. He held in memory the satire of the poet:

> His study! With what authors is it stor'd?
> In books, not authors, curious is my lord:
> To all their dated backs he turns you round;
> These Aldus printed, those Du Suëil has bound
> Lo! some are vellum, and the rest as good
> For all his lordship knows, but they are wood.

 While

While Sophia and I were sitting in pleasing discourse, we were interrupted by the entrance of my uncle, followed by Mr. Vaughan. I felt a little disconcerted at his appearance, from the remembrance of our discourse while at breakfast; but it soon passed away, for neither my uncle nor Sophia concurred to prolong the embarassment by those significant looks, or by those half suppressed words which used to be employed against me.

It may, perhaps, surprise some of my female readers to learn that the assiduities of Mr. Vaughan were neither more urgent nor more numerous since the disclosure of his sentiments. If possible, indeed, they were diminished.—There was nothing for them to gain, and they only obstructed, in some degree, the developement of those parts of his character which were permanent and interesting. 'Whatever is artificial in manners may be dispensed with when it is

is to make room for what is natural; remembering that nature, tutored by virtue and good sense is deprived of its inherent impurities. Perhaps, indeed, with these restrictions, the word *nature* is misapplied: but I cannot at this moment recal a better term. Suffice it that my meaning be understood, and I will leave to cavillers the ambiguity of my language.

To some inquiries which my uncle made respecting the widow of Mr. Thornton, Mr. Vaughan replied, that his exertions in her behalf were successfully terminated. "I did not, however, bring them to such a completion without some difficulty, and indeed without some personal danger. The miscreant, who claimed the performance of the deed, strove, at first, to foil me by collusion and artifice; but these I resisted, and thoroughly convinced him that I could and would resist them. He then became clamorous, insolent, and menacing; but the spirit of the

the bully soon evaporated, and left the mére dregs and lees of the man to quiet abhorrence. When he talked of challenging me, I told him, without reserve, that no fear of obloquy from *his* acquaintance could awe me to an act which my reason disavowed: that I had called upon him to arrange a matter as between civilised men; and not to terminate it with the effusion of blood with the ferocity of brutes.

"How did he reply to that?" said my uncle.

"You may easily conceive how he would reply when he found that my resolutions were pacific," answered Mr. Vaughan. "The bully sinks into the coward when he is resisted: the coward swells into the bully when he is avoided. He talked big; fretted, fumed, and swore; and when he had reached that point, having nothing more to say or do with him, I arose and departed. I will not deny that my temper was somewhat

moved,

moved, for nothing rouses it so soon as the sight of frontless wickedness. But, as we do not willingly imitate what we loathe, I am seldom in danger of losing myself in the vortex of another man's depravity."

"Well," said I, "you may rest assured that you have forfeited all claim to the title of a man of honour."

"Yes," replied he, smiling, "in the same manner as I have no pretensions to the renown of a footpad. No robber will consider me as of the fraternity: nor will any duellist. I am equally remote from the celebrity of both characters."

"But both characters are not equally bad," said my uncle."

"They cannot," replied Mr. Vaughan, "be put exactly upon a level, because the one offends against the laws of God and man, and commits a direct violation upon the privileges of human nature and upon the bulwarks of society: while the other sins *certainly* against the will of Heaven,

Heaven, and violates *probably* the order of social existence. I say probably, because the action is mutually voluntary."

"It is to be regretted," said Sir James, "that the invention of man has yet discovered no milder composition for offence than the destruction of life, or at least the risque of that destruction."

"It *is* to be regretted," replied Mr. Vaughan; "and especially when we consider the insignificance of the causes that too frequently lead to this disgraceful practice. I do not know how a man, who is a father, a husband, a son, or a brother, acquits himself to his own conscience when he enters the field for such a purpose: not, if his antagonist fall, how he soothes that conscience into the belief that he has not committed murder. The plea of personal defence is futile; for in this country personal safety is not so wholly at the mercy of individual rancour. There are laws, and vigorous ones too, if we choose to fly to them. As to the

the justification of honour, I tremble to think how that will avail them at the judgement seat of God. For, what is this honour? Its most bigotted followers cannot solve the question. They will tell you, that if they do not challenge, or accept a challenge, under certain circumstances, they will not be held as "*men of honour:* that is, they will be disowned by a few profligate, vain, and immoral beings, for whose good opinion they are to risk their life. What an absurdity! Why it is an emancipation, it is a freedom, it is a glorious liberty, to throw off the yoke of *their* opinion. No good, no wise, no virtuous man, will despise them: and, what is of infinitely greater importance, their God will not despise them. If I am challenged, I have but two things to consider: have I given offence? have I acted wrong? If I have, it becomes me as a rational being, and it is my duty as a christian, to acknowledge my offence, and to repair the wrong I have

have committed. If he, whom I have offended or injured, be not satisfied with this, I have no more to do: I have done towards him all that would be required of me by my Creator: and shall I dare to shed my blood to appease man's proud and intemperate passions? On the other hand, if I am offended or injured, let me, if I can, practice the sublime virtue of forgiveness: if I cannot, let me demand that concession which I feel I would myself make: if this be denied, let me not seek for blood. These should be the arguments of a wise man: these should be the reflections of a christian. Is it the part of wisdom to ascertain guilt or innocence by an ordeal scarcely less absurd than the burning ploughshares?—No matter how much I am in the wrong; if I have more skill than my adversary, or if a lucky chance should aid me, and I wound or kill him;—I am immediately transformed into a man of honour! Nay, if we both retire without any personal injury,

injury, provided we have, each of us, fired off a loaded pistol, why then we are both men of honour! What a despicable sophistry it is!"

"Still," said Sir James, "it seems to be the opinion of many that it is a sophistry which cannot be dispensed with."

"We may argue thus," replied Mr. Vaughan, "and vindicate any practice. For my own part, if an action cannot bear the test of common sense, I require no better proof of its being wrong. And, in this question of duelling, I defy its most zealous advocates to advance a single argument in its justification which may not be refuted by a simple reference to that excellent quality of the human mind. None but the mad, the foolish, or the wicked, will set their life upon the hazard of every man's summons. In short, no man possessing true wisdom would be instigated to the commission of any deed which he did not approve of. No doubt, among a certain class of persons,

sons, I shall be stigmatised for my conduct this morning: but of what importance is *their* opinion to me, that for it, I should incur the probability of rushing, uncalled, unprepared, into my Maker's presence? Is a man to be tempted to his own destruction by the menaces of a ruffian? Against any thing which rancour, malice, or villainy may vent, I have a sure antidote in the principles that influence me."

"Well," said my uncle, "I rejoice that *you* have had the wisdom to save your life, and the humanity to save the relict of your friend from want and misery. Mrs. Carlton is much advanced in years, and ——"

"Hush!" replied Mr. Vaughan with a smile, "never believe that a lady can grow old. It is in vain that you read the characters of time upon their brow: you shall never hear his accents from their tongue. Youth has no correlative in the lexicon of a woman."

"You

"You are very severe, Mr. Vaughan," said Sophia; "but I am sure you will allow that there are exceptions."

"No doubt," he replied, "but I cannot speak of what I never saw."

"Come, come," said my uncle, "I must not stand by and hear you libel the whole sex in this manner. Besides, I believe you will seldom find man or woman willing to confess that unwelcome truth, that they are old; at least not till decrepitude, palsy, or deprivation of some sense, proclaim it loudly to the world."

"Perhaps you are right," answered Mr. Vaughan. "Old age is like the rainbow chaced by the heedless boy: always distant, yet always near. We all allow that we are approaching fast towards it: but few confess that they are yet arrived. We contract the circle, year after year, and month after month, till, at last, we bring it to its narrowest circumference, the *grave;* and, as we sink into it, we confess, with a sigh, that nature has attained

attained her limits and now seeks her final rest."

"If," said I, "old age be that comfortless state which Johnson has depicted, it were to be wished that the delusion universally prevailed. But, I believe there are many who have a practical conviction that it is a state which is not without its appropriate comforts and delights."

"Depend upon it," replied Mr. Vaughan, "the delusion does prevail. In fact, we are never without that delusion which would persuade us that the future has something in store different from the past. The mind loves to repose upon the uncertainty of hope, for fancy is then sent out in quest of untried delights, and the heart is happy in visionary bliss."

"And most men," said my uncle, "possess that delusion which teaches them their own importance, from the persuasion of which all these hopes, which you speak of, too frequently arise."

"The

"The pride of self-esteem," replied Mr. Vaughan, "attends us through life. At eighteen, we think ourselves great, and talk, and reason, and dogmatize: at twenty-five, we still think ourselves great, and look back upon eighteen and wonder how we were endured: and thus we continue, with retrospective humiliation and present importance: we see the fallacy of the past, but we never suspect its existence in the immediate moment."

"But this," said I, "is a salutary deception. Without it, we should be incompetent to discharge any of the duties or to participate in any of the pleasures of life. If we possessed that pure intelligence which could strip the actions of the world of all extrinsic qualities, we should be as unfit to partake of this terrestrial state as mere mortal man would be to enjoy the communion of spiritual beings."

"I willingly admit your induction," replied Mr. Vaughan, "and it reminds me of a remark made by Lord Bacon, 'that

'that if there were taken, out of men's minds, vain opinions, flattering hopes, false valuations, imaginations as one would, and the like, it would leave the minds of a number of men poor shrunken things, full of melancholy and indisposition, and unpleasing to themselves.'—But though, as you say, it is a salutary deception, yet it should be admitted to operate no more than what is necessary."

There was a pause in our discourse for some time, which was interrupted by Mr. Vaughan, who observed to my uncle that the contemplation of a library always inspired him with melancholy emotions. I did not immediately comprehend how this was; nor did Sir James, for he inquired, with a smile that was half ironical, what he meant?

"The sight of so much mortality," replied Mr. Vaughan, with a tender solemnity of manner, "as loads the shelves, awakens in me reflections of a serious nature. When I look upon the names of

of the authors, and recollect that they were eminent in their time; that they were loved and honoured, or neglected and despised, by the age in which they lived; that the mind which conceived, and the hand which wrote, those exquisite productions which have formed the solace of my life are gone and perished; when I see the poet, and his critic of after ages, side by side; when I behold contemporaries, who seemed born but to be each other's foe, now quietly reposing, on the same shelf: when I view the infidel and the divine, the wit and the moralist, the poet and the historian, the philosopher and the dramatist, the successive glories of successive times, all before me; and when I call to memory, that the dust of these illustrious beings, could it be gathered together from distant regions, would be in nothing distinguishable from the common earth we tread upon, I am filled with awe: I meditate with pious reverence upon that creative

spirit which dwells within me, and I learn to estimate the instability of every thing which is merely human."

"I confess," said my uncle, after a moment's pause, "that a library never suggested such thoughts to my mind: though I believe I shall never enter one hereafter without leaving it as melancholy as a 'lugg'd bear.' Your pensive morality reminds me of the qualities ascribed to solitude by Shakspeare, which

> Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
> Sermons in stones, and good in every thing."

"I have no doubt," replied Mr. Vaughan, "that these reflections may appear to be inadequately excited; and, indeed, there are few to whom I would disclose them. We are so apt to ridicule the evidences of those feelings with which we are ourselves unacquainted, that a man who lays his heart open to inspection without caution, only furnishes a pretext for the scepticism of others; and scepticism,

real

real or assumed, is the fruitful parent of slanderous invective."

"Most probably," answered my uncle, "you will have your full share of that slanderous invective. Scepticism will doubt the purity of your motives in your recent conduct; and you may expect to hear cowardice and pusillanimity proclaimed as the causes of it."

"I am prepared for it," said Mr. Vaughan; "and, indeed, I ought to be prepared for it. There are few men, I believe, who have fallen more within the level of detraction than myself. A proud consciousness of my principles, and a determined adherence to them, have led me to step aside from the common track of life, as often as I believed that it led to error, folly, or dissipation. They, whom I left, upbraided me as an apostate, and the din of malice resounded in my ears. But they had not power to disturb my course. I heard them; I turned to the register of my own breast; I found a con-

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futation that satisfied me: I was contented: I proceeded onwards."

"But while you despise," said I, "the rancour of calumny as directed against yourself, you must, I am sure, deplore it as a vice of no common magnitude: as a vice more hostile, perhaps, to the happiness of man and to the welfare of society, than many others which obtain a larger share of our execration."

"I *do* deplore its existence," replied Mr. Vaughan, "and I abhor its practice. I agree with you, that it is more hostile to the peace of man, than any other evil which infests private life. '*Pride*,' says Sir Thomas Browne, 'is a vice whose name is comprehended in a monosyllable, but in its nature not circumscribed with a world;' and this important monosyllable is what generates all the malignity of censure. It is easier to degrade the wise, the great, and the good to our own level, than it is to ascend to their height: not that we do degrade them in fact, but we please

please ourselves with the belief of it. It is the sure quality of a mean mind that it hates whatever it cannot equal. A beautiful woman will be certain to have detractors among the ugly: if she be witty, she will have them among the dull; if learned, among the ignorant; if good, among the bad: and if she unite in herself all these qualities, she will unite all the world against her. Think not that I speak too severely; for you must remember, not what is professed *to* her, but what is said *of* her, and then count me her friends. It is the same in every sphere of life. It seems to be the general sense of mankind, that all virtuous and eminent qualities shall excite envy and defamation; and, it must be reluctantly confessed, that this propensity is most powerful in the female sex, which I attribute to their defective education.—Paucity of knowledge drives them to any expedients for the employment of time; and their sedentary domestic habits make

make them a sort of spy upon the actions of the world. Let any one recal to mind what is the chief conversation at a tea-table. Does it turn upon the virtues, the excellencies, or the merits of the absent? No: their failings, their defects, their vices, are scrutinized, are ridiculed, are promulgated: errors are invented and magnified; petty inconsistences are taunted with acrimony; dark insinuations are levelled; conduct, of whose motive and end we are ignorant, is stigmatised; and the corrupted heart is gorged with the offals of human nature."

"I think your delineation is rather overcharged," said my uncle; "though I admit its general truth."

"I differ from you," replied Mr. Vaughan. "It is a picture, the original of which is to be found in every house. And what is the consequence? Those who hear, repeat; those who partake of the spoil, commiserate the loss of the despoiled; friendship is broken in upon; domestic

domestic peace is violated; confidence is destroyed; and feuds are generated; Johnson has asserted Shakspeare's claim to immortality upon a single line in Macbeth: I think he deserves it equally for two in Hamlet:—

'Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou 'shalt not escape CALUMNY.'

There is no security against the tongue of the defamer. If the criminality of an action be estimated by the extent of injury which it produces, I believe there are few crimes more serious than that of slander: and if the infelicity of life could always be traced up to its certain commencement, I am convinced that an awful proportion would be found to flow from this baleful source. I am never so indignant as when I hear a person needlessly defaming the absent: for, if they *be* bad, why should we unnecessarily proclaim it? and if they be not, we are then making ourselves infamous. The pious and amiable Fenelon has observed, that 'charity

'charity does not require of us that we should not see the faults of others, but that we should avoid being unnecessarily attentive to them; and that we should not be blind to their good qualities, while we are clear-sighted to their bad ones.' I wish our divines would more frequently introduce this subject into their discourses from the pulpit: it would avail more to the well-being of man, and to the practice of virtue, than subtle disquisitions upon obscure dogmas of faith. According to modern society, the departure of a person from any company is a well understood signal to commence an attack; and though this attack is varied according to the rank of the assailants, some sinning *with* politeness and some *without*, yet, I make no difference in my own mind between the well-bred sneer of the drawing-room and the coarse abuse of the tradesman's parlour. The same meanness, duplicity, and malignity prevail, whether the attempt is veiled beneath

beneath the gaiety of humour, the brilliancy of wit, or the solemnity of truth."

Mr. Vaughan paused. He had here disclosed to me a new quality of his mind, and one which no one could contemplate without agreeable emotions. It coincided with what my uncle had mentioned to me at breakfast; and I was glad to find this conformity between his opinion and Mr. Vaughan's declaration. To me, his sentiments were precious. I had always held the practice which he reprobated in extreme abhorrence. I had, indeed, never witnessed its influence till my arrival in London. Under my father's roof it was known only by name, and it was mentioned only to be detested.

After some desultory conversation, which does not merit to be recorded, Mr. Vaughan departed, though strongly pressed by my uncle to remain to dinner. He could not, because Mrs. Thornton expected him, to whom he had to conv

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the confirmation of his success in her behalf. As he excused himself, he looked towards me, as if to obtain my sanction to his proceeding. Could I deny it?—Much as I might lose by his absence, yet, how could he better approve himself in my estimation than by sacrificing the selfishness of individual pleasure to the dignified task of bestowing comfort and aid where both were so much needed? He went; and with him went the best and noblest affections of my nature.

CHAP. XXII.

My volume is now hastening to a close. I have little to tell; and that little I shall tell with reluctance.

Mr. Vaughan saw, or fancied he saw in me, those qualities from which happiness might be expected to flow in the married state. The timidity of his character had always restrained him from disclosing to *me* what were his hopes. His letter, indeed, had told me of his love; and from that period he embraced every opportunity that presented itself of evincing that love in a manner at once dignified and delicate. I received its homages without affectation. I felt the highest sentiments of respect for his mind. I loved the qualities of his heart. Here then was the "union"*

* See Page 148.

which

which my revered father had prescribed in his last moments, as that without which no permanent felicity could be found in marriage.

I feared, however, that I had neglected his other admonition: "to proceed with deliberation." Yet, what more could time disclose? Mr. Vaughan was intimately known to my uncle; and for myself, though I willingly believed that I might find in him additional virtues, I scarcely feared that I should discover any vices. In the course of my acquaintance with him I had seen and heard him upon various occasions; but, upon *every* occasion, I found him influenced by those simple rules of integrity which nothing could pervert. To him, therefore, I might look up as to one who would be my companion, perhaps my guide, in the path of rectitude. He would supply the place of him of whom heaven had bereft me.

great endowments of mind gave

me

me every assurance of intellectual delight, without which, all other pleasures are vain, transitory, and degrading. I could look forward to that cheerful communion of thought which relieves life of its monotony to those who are placed beyond the necessity of labour. And I should thus be saved from the compulsion of seeking pleasure in gaiety, dissipation, or fashion.

In the virtues of his heart, I had the safest pledge for that of *his* conduct; and in the liberality of his judgement I beheld a surety for a candid interpretation of *mine*. Suspicion would be banished from that mind which is unacquainted with practical vice.

After some months had elapsed, from the time of his writing the letter, he ventured to disclose to my uncle the hopes which he entertained. With him he discoursed upon all that is usually thought necessary to be discussed previously the completion of those hopes. This

offers were accepted, need not be told; and that the acceptation gave him pleasure, will be doubted by none.

Of myself, I cannot speak as I might of another. The custom of society interposes and bids me be silent. [illegible] I am happy.

THE END.

[illegible], Printer,
[illegible]-Inn-Court, London.